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NME Originals

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INTERVIEWS, REVIEWS & RARE PHOTOS

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 5 UK £5.99

AND THE FOLK ROCK BOOM 1964-1974

NEIL YOUNG
JONI MITCHELL
THE BYRDS
DONOVAN

Melody Maker
Win Donovan's harmonica and harness
TURN TO PAGE NINE
EXCLUSIVE
RAY COLEMAN HEARS THE BEATLES NEXT No.1 SINGLE

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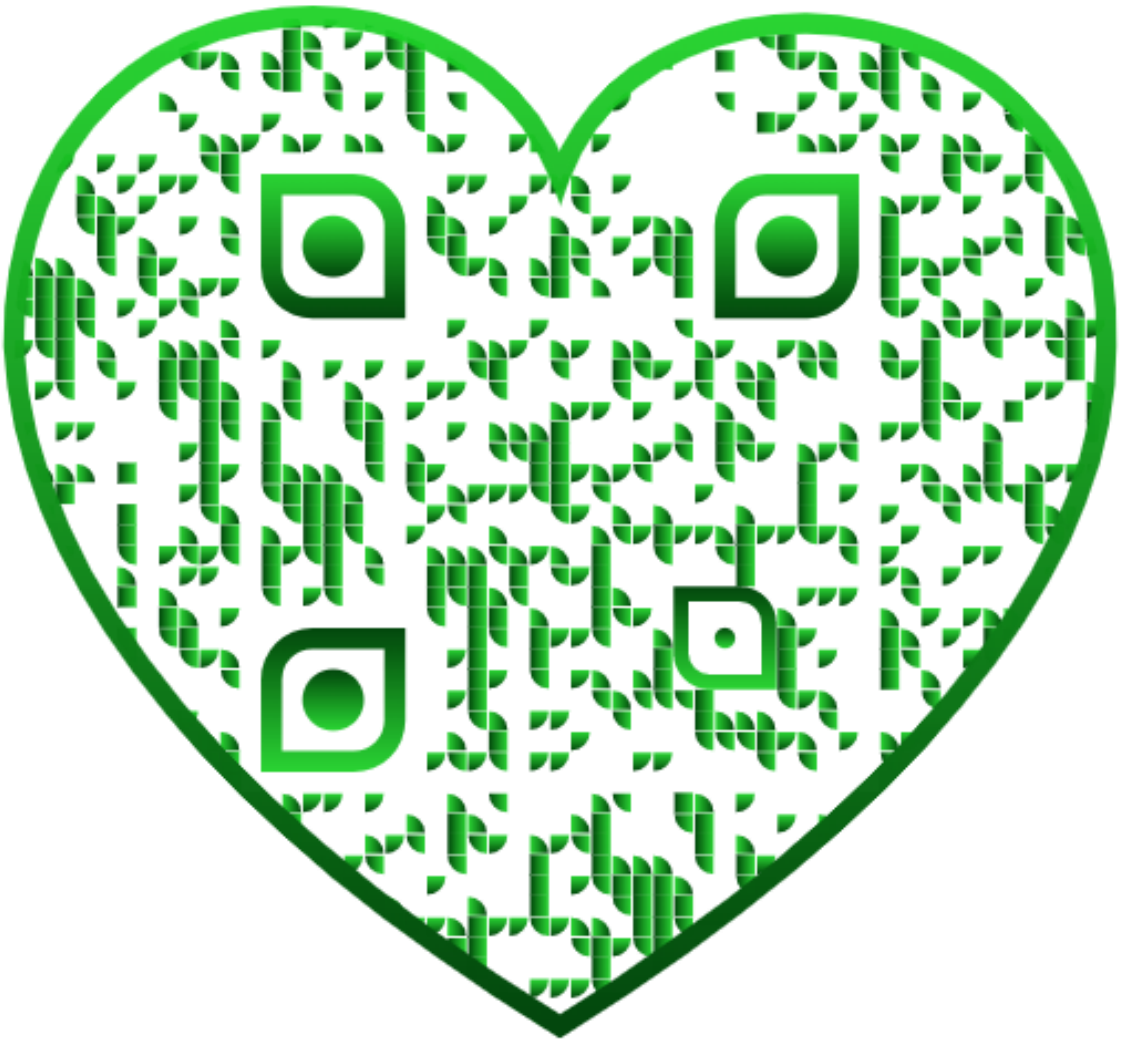

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WOKE UP THIS MORNING AND I WROTE DOWN THIS SONG...

Stranger things have happened but it sure seems weird that, when we got about halfway through compiling this volume of *NME Originals*, our principal cover subject unexpectedly became the hottest musical act on the planet.

It was enough to get anyone thinking and so we did: why on earth is Bob Dylan – a man whose best, most potent and meaningful works were recorded some 40 years ago (during the time span covered by this magazine, in fact) – being suddenly lionised anew? It's nothing to do with celebrating any anniversary and he's released no fresh work which can hold a candle to his greatest stuff. No, it's all down to BBC2 screening a two part Martin Scorsese documentary on Bob's wild years and an accompanying 'Bootleg Series' CD which excavates some of his best known songs from around that time in rawer demo or live form. And all of this, somehow, seems to resonate with 2005.

Now Bob's a bone fide genius – this seems to go without saying. But everyone's known that for donkey's years. So how come ol' Bob seems so right, right now? Well, for one thing, the form of music loosely described as "folk" was making a bit of a comeback anyway. Several of this year's most satisfying releases have been down to maverick talents who have chosen to work outside the regular formulae for success set out by the music and retail business. I'm thinking here of the warbling elfin hippy prince Devendra Banhart and his exuberant 'Cripple Crow' LP. And the madcap Sufjan Stevens, working his way through a project where he's basing an entire album on each of the 50 American states with results far richer than they have any right to be. I'm thinking of the sombre Espers and the extravagant Arcade Fire and, yes, even the soppy James Blunt. Then there's the breathlessly anticipated return after 12 years of the sorceress herself, Kate Bush.

These artists all qualify as folkies and, had they been recording 40 years ago, there's no doubt they would all have figured in this volume. But why the current vogue for folk? It could be down to a number of reasons. I've a hunch that the more stressed and complicated life gets, the simpler we like our pleasures. When there's an outside chance you might get blown to bits travelling to work of a morning, death metal on your iPod is hardly salve for the soul. The pastoral musings of Sandy Denny, on the other hand, provide an alternative calming headspace.

Then there's the fact that, when there's something to protest against – an unjust war or a corrupt government or, in this case, both – it helps to hear the words of a song packed with indignation or encouragement loud and clear. And in the midst of the madness, when you feel powerless to control anything let alone determine your own destiny, a little musical one-on-one with a singer songwriter can feel like ersatz therapy.

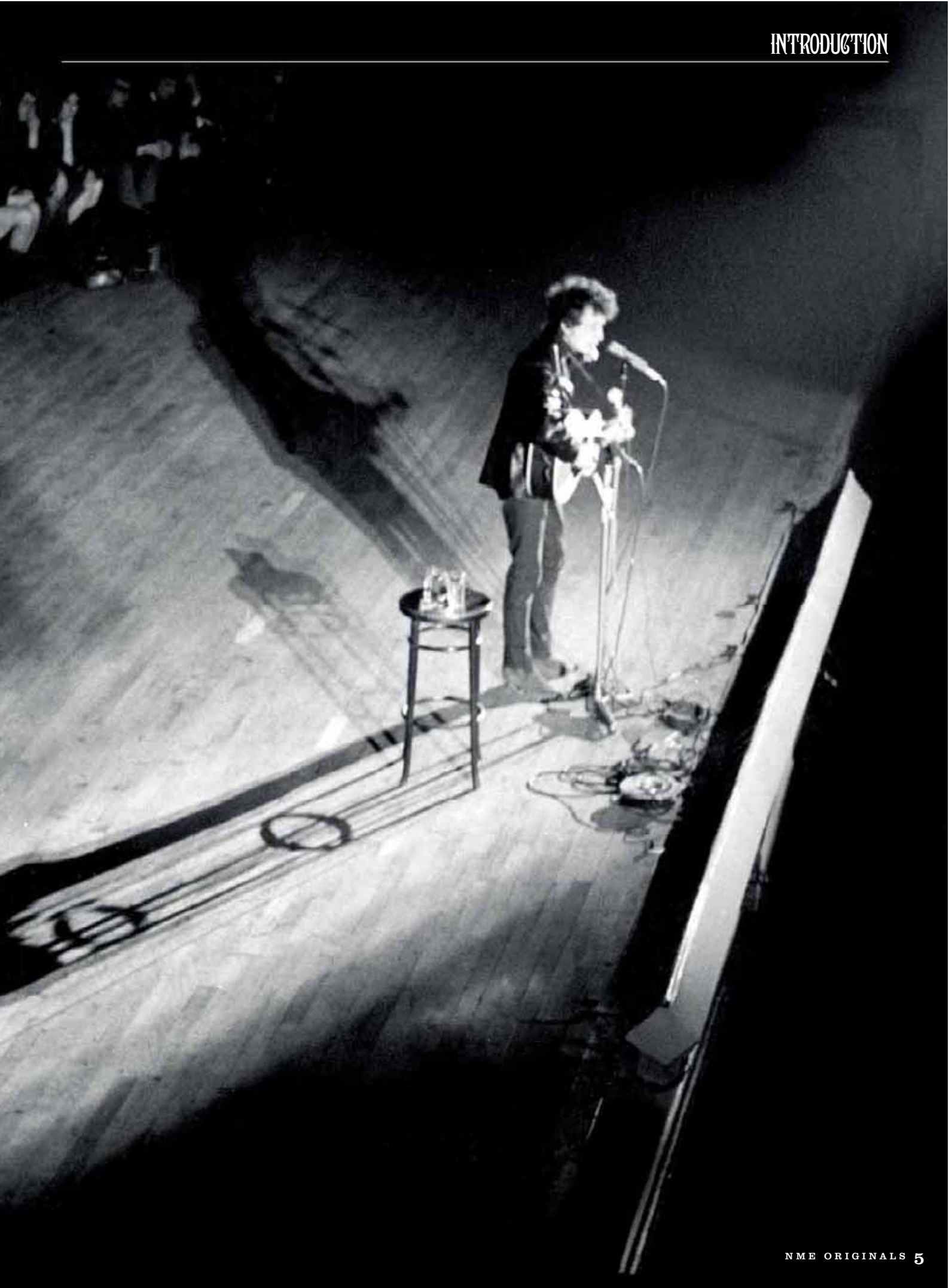
There's also something more trustworthy about an individual than a band. The singer who sets forth his or her own emotions and ideas in their own words to their own accompaniment just seems somehow more honest than a group prancing about playing roles. And finally, the have-guitar-will-travel guerrilla gigging of Pete Doherty and his vagabond tribe of Albion idealists feels like the first genuinely revolutionary thing to happen to the performance of music since punk. In working outside of industry regulated venues, in playing where they want, when they want and being able to react in song to the immediate circumstances around them, they are returning the power to the people and bringing a life and purpose to music beyond just entertainment.

All of this activity, taking place right now, has its precedents in the era covered by this volume. From the arrival of Dylan, his stoner vision far beyond the comprehension of the establishment, to the sweet downhome homilies of Joni Mitchell and James Taylor offering spiritual balm while kids protesting against the Vietnam war were being slaughtered by US troops on American soil, there are historical and musical parallels. And in the journey travelled by Crosby, Stills & Nash, who started out in 1968 with the avowed intent of doing their own thing and ended up in 1974 a monstrous piece of business, strung out and bored playing stadiums for megabucks, there may be lessons to be learned.

Those were – and these are – confusing and dangerous times. As CSN&Y sang on the refrain to 'Déjà Vu': we have all been here before.

Enjoy.

Steve Sutherland
Editor



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201751

CBS RECORDS

CBS RECORDS · 104 NEW BOND ST · LONDON W1

Melody Maker

1d. weekly

May 8, 1965

ANIMALS MAKE SURPRISE MOVE
PAGE THREE

DYLAN DIGS DONOVAN!

SELL-OUT DYLAN'S BRITISH TOUR IS A GREAT SUCCESS. FACKED HOUSES EVERYWHERE!

'HE'S A NICE GUY, I LIKE HIM'—BOB

BOB DYLAN and Donovan met this week. One of the biggest controversies shaking the British music scene ended when the British singer — accused of copying Dylan's every move — went to the Savoy Hotel, London, where Dylan is staying during his tour of the country.

'For a joke'

Stunt

FAN DONOVAN VISITED BYL AN'S HOTEL AND PLAYED SOME SONGS TO HIM.

Jackie—slick chart chick!

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Melody Maker

1d. weekly

MODERN JAZZ QUARTET TOUR

BYRDS

— fly into legal flap

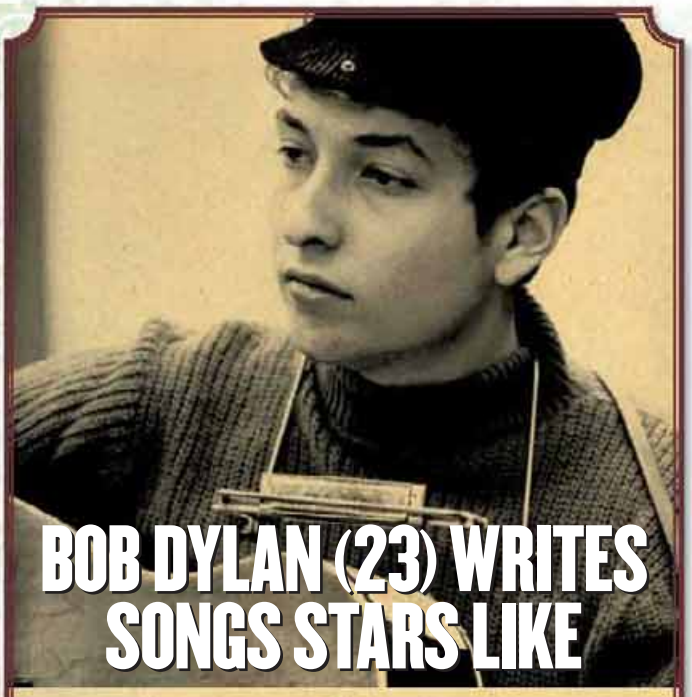
FINAL RAVE!

CRISIS at the CAVERN: THE FACTS

CHAPTER 1

1964-1965

DYLAN AND DONOVAN BATTLE IT OUT FOR THE HEARTS OF THE FOLKIES, THE BYRDS CRASH LAND ÓN THE SCENE AND PROTEST SONGS GET GRUESOME



BOB DYLAN (23) WRITES SONGS STARS LIKE

NME, 8 May 1964, page 4

What have Bobby Darin, Marlene Dietrich, Peter, Paul & Mary in common? Answer: Bob Dylan. They have all recorded his songs.

Dylan is 23 and has composed a lot of folk music. His most famous piece is 'Blowin' In The Wind', which indicates the kind of material he likes to write.

He plays guitar and harmonica (at the same time), as well as singing.

His albums attract big sales in folk-conscious America, where critics call Dylan "the most important new voice in this singing generation". Folk singer Pete Seeger goes further: "Bob Dylan will be America's greatest troubadour – if he doesn't explode."

It was in his blue jeans, wrinkled shirt and boots that he turned up at the recording studio to make his first album.

"To look like that, he must be a genius," said surprised disc executives. They were more surprised at the big sales of the album, simply called 'Bob Dylan'.

Bob arrives next week for a Royal Festival Hall concert on May 17.

Dylan was born in Duluth, Minnesota. He ran away to Chicago when he was ten and by the age of 15 he'd learned guitar, autoharp and harmonica.

A folk singer-composer, he was influenced by Muddy Waters and Hank Williams equally. Woody Guthrie was another who made a big impact on Dylan.

If you want to

Bob Dylan talks to Max Jones…

MM, 23 May 1964, page 12

One lunchtime, before his sellout concert at the Royal Festival Hall, I called to see Bob Dylan. The 23-year-old American singer, guitarist, harmonica player and writer of songs which go a few fathoms deeper than the *"Yeah, yeah, yeah"* stage received me with cordiality and a bottle of Beaujolais.

It was incongruous, in view of the blistering social criticism in many of his songs, to meet him in the genteel surroundings of a hotel in Mayfair. Particularly as he was dressed in jeans and boots and leather jacket. He was aware of the incongruity.

We discussed it, and singing and song writing, plays, books and the British folk scene.

This is some of what he had to say…

"I don't know anything about the folk scene here, nothing at all. I went to one of the clubs when I was in London in 1962 but didn't stop long. I know some of your writers and actors. Who in particular? Ewan MacColl.

"I like writing and I like writers. Len Chandler, a friend of mine who writes, he's fine. I might sing some of his songs one of these days. At the moment, I only sing my own songs. And a few traditional things."

Confining

"You ask if I have any difficulty producing songs. You know they come up and stay in my mind sometimes – sometimes a long time, I just write them out when the right time comes.

"The words come first. Then I fit a tune or just strum the chords. Really I'm not a tune writer. The songs for me are very confining, or something. I'm not writing that many songs.

"I've written a lot of things with no structure, written them only because I like to sing them. 'A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall'… I wrote the words of it on a piece of paper. But there was no tune that really fit to it, so I just sort of play chords without a tune.

"But all this comes under the heading of a definition and I don't care to define what I do. Other people seem to have a hard time doing that."

Survive

"Writing, yes I do like writing. That's mainly what I do, is just writing… you know, it keeps me awake. I've written a play, well, I'm working on it.

"I've written a couple already but I'm not satisfied with them. They haven't been performed. Do I want them to be? Not right now.

"This one I'm writing, I can't tell you much about it. It's like some kind of

Page 12—MELODY MAKER, May 16, 1964

Bob Dylan..

'Most important folk singer around to-day'

BOB DYLAN has been described as the most important folk singer to-day.

Not, that is, if we look for folk singers to tell us something, from a personal viewpoint, about what is happening today, as well as to sing the epics of other times.

The trusty old songs are all very well, but you need a change of diet. With Bob Dylan you get it. His repertoire is stuffed with original material which gives a really individual slant on the way we are living and, as he puts it, not living.

"All I'm doing is saying what's on my mind the best way I know how," Dylan explains. "And whatever else you say about me, everything I do and sing and write comes out of me."

Dylan certainly says what's on his mind, and though his inspiration quite obviously came from the great Woody Guthrie, he composes and delivers his songs in his own way.

The influence of Guthrie goes deep. When Dylan does a talking blues, you hear it often in voice and guitar. The sardonic asides and introductions remind me of Woody, and so do the completely outspoken lyrics of many of his ballads.

I don't know what songs he'll be doing on his live British shows. But they are bound to be rich.

He lashes out hard in such songs as "Masters of war" and "With God on our side", enters fantasy in "Hard rain," and is amusingly topical.—Max Jones.

Influenced by Woody Guthrie, Bob Dylan still delivers his songs in his own way.

do it — then do it!

Dylan: tie-less and Ferrari-less in 1964

maze. Just a bunch of people who play act, really act, try to act, you know, for each other, talk to you, about you, above you, below you. A lot of it is just unconscious writing. It doesn't have a title.

"Did you know I was doing three books with a photographer? He's Barry Feinstein, husband of Mary of Peter, Paul & Mary. He's been taking pictures for ten years.

"The first one's supposed to have been done a while ago but may not be finished 'til the fall. It's just pictures and the words I'm going to write that coincide with the photographs, that somehow fall into the same directional mood."

Traditional

"All the pictures were shot in Hollywood: shots of everything, a whole picture of Hollywood from the beautiful sign on the hill to Marlon Brando speaking while someone holds up a sign saying 'Nigger lover'. Yeah, I dig this photographer, and I dig taking pictures myself.

"Now this thing you asked me about singing traditional songs. Well, I did. I sang the folk songs and country music, and I played rock'n'roll piano once. Oh yeah, I played in R&B bands.

"The time I changed was when I landed in New York… you know, New York for me! You have to go there and sort of surrender to New York. That's how I changed. I just dug it all. It taught me to dig it all, to keep digging it all.

"There's nothing that's not worth listening to, that's not worth thinking about, that's not worth singing. I learned that. I met people there, I was conscious of people and somehow come out of it very unconscious and not feeling guilty about anything."

No guilt

"I don't have any guilt, and then again, saying that is like saying I'm completely guilty. If someone gets killed, who's to say who fired the gun? And why? He fired just because he was uptight.

"About this hotel: I was booked in here. It isn't bad really. But apart from these rooms, the bar is the only place I'm allowed in without a tie, no deep philosophical reason for not wearing one. I just don't have a tie.

"I don't have a Ferrari, either."

Ferrari

"I don't bother myself about thoughts of success. I'd get a Ferrari if I had the urge, and the money.

"One thing I know is that you can't please everybody. You know somebody's going to pick on you for something. They're going to find something wrong.

"I'm good, kind, gentle, I think – I mean no harm to anybody, but people pick me apart. Either they like me or else they slam me. I get put down a lot, but I dig it when they slam me for some odd reason.

"This question of British singers doing foreign songs, blues and so on: I think that if somebody from England wants to sing a Southern blues, it's great. If you want to do it, do it. Who's to say you can't do it? Who's to know, if you can't try it?"

Rules

"It's the people who don't do it, who live by the rules, who cause all the trouble. Life is too small to worry about it if a man sings something his grandfather couldn't have sung.

"If an English singer is happy singing a Southern US ballad, I'd rather see him happy than see him doing something else and being unhappy.

"Authenticity? I know authentic folk music when I hear it, know it for myself. But what difference does it make?"

"I'm good, kind, gentle, I think — I mean no harm to anybody, but people pick me apart. Either they like me or else they slam me"

BOB DYLAN
Another Side Of Bob Dylan
CBS
NME, 4 December 1964, page 12
No argument about it, Dylan is different. His singing is often out of tune. His voice wails and his diction slurs (sort of a singing Marlon Brando). His harmonica and guitar playing sounds as if he's still learning. Yet he gets out his messages with a sincerity that makes you listen. And when he turns to humour, it's way-out, as in 'I Shall Be Free, No 10'. Seems Dylan just sings what comes into his head (or writes down what he's thinking), and if it needs polishing, he doesn't worry. Allen Evans
Dylan's voice wails and his diction slurs – sort of like a singing Marlon Brando

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/REDFERNS

DONOVAN

HEADING FOR FAME OR MISFORTUNE...

WHAT THE FANS THINK

IT didn't take long for the knockers to get at Donovan. Of course this boy has been influenced by Dylan and Guthrie, but what difference does that make? He's a welcome change from the usual folk singers. More power to Donovan!—**E. J. HOLMES Barking, Essex.**

● How can people be so cruel to one poor, small boy just starting his career as a singer. Why don't people wait before accusing him of being a bad copy of Bob Dylan. — **Miss PERIN KHAN. London, W8.**

● Donovan hasn't called himself a "British Bob Dylan". Other people gave him the tag.—**SIMON DALE, London, E.3.**

BEFORE long Donovan will deserve the title of "Top Discovery of 1965". He is absolutely fantastic!—**LIZA LEWIS, London, E17.**

● Of course there is some similarity between Donovan and Dylan. They are both great.—**BOBBY MITCHELL, Enfield.**

● Full marks to Donovan for giving an ever increasing proportion of England's youth the music it wants.—**ROB SHARP, Hemel Hempstead, Herts.**

● A "This machine kills" slogan on Donovan's guitar smacks of some cynical work behind the scenes. If Donovan sincerely wanted to carry on the Guthrie tradition he would be singing in the pubs of North Kensington and the East End. —**MICHAEL MOORCOCK, London, W11.**

DONOVAN! The mere mention of the name is likely to inflame passions. It's a long, long time since any new artist stirred up such an air of heated controversy.

From his first professional engagement — on ITV's "Ready, Steady, Go!"—he split British pop and folk fans right down the middle.

There are those who see him as a refreshing new talent, the British equivalent to Bob Dylan, a songwriter of originality and promise.

Knockers

Others have renamed him "Dylovan" and claim he even copies Dylan's dress. They use words like plagiarism, phony and the inevitable scruffy.

Donovan, full name Donovan Leitch, turns out to be a quiet-spoken 18-year-old, not without a fair helping of both intelligence and charm.

Do the knockers' cries that he is an imitation Dylan worry him at all?

"It doesn't bother me at all," he assured me in the MM office this week. "It just shows a lack of understanding of other singers in the idiom by the people who say it.

"It's been said a few times in the past—I first had it said about me before I had even heard of Bob Dylan.

"I started playing guitar and singing about two years ago and I have always sung folk songs. The first singer I heard of was Woody Guthrie —and I read about the guy before I ever listened to his records. I also heard Jack Elliott, then Jesse Fuller. You see I don't just listen to one special era.

Popular

"I was writing a lot of poetry and short stories when I was 13 or 14. Then I turned to writing songs—it was a slow process at first.

"I was living on the beaches when Peter Eden met me in Southend where I had gone to hear a R&B group called the Cops And Robbers.

"I did some tapes at Southern Music and one of the people who was there was Bob Bickford of 'Ready, Steady, Go!' and he got me on the programme.

"It was the first time I had played anywhere except in pubs and on beaches. It was weird, very weird."

Donovan's guitar bears the legend "This machine kills." I reminded him that Woody Guthrie's used to display "This machine kills fascists."

"Well, I didn't think there were any fascists left—until I got into the music business," retorted Donovan.

"Does moving into the pop world worry me? I suppose you mean morally. The way I see it popular means music for popular tastes, and that includes folk music.

"If folk is ever going to become really popular it will be this year. It's time for songs of sincerity sung with a bit of soul. There are some natural songs in the charts now, like the Righteous Brothers do, instead of the 'I love you because I'm blue' stuff.

"One weird thing I'd like to do is open a folk label for a lot of singers who could then record without being labelled commercial. The ethnics think you are not a folk singer if you record for Decca instead of Folkways or Topic.

"I just don't dig the folk club scene. The audiences lap up my act, but the organisers only want English stuff. I'm mostly interested in the American stuff. It comes naturally to me.

BOB DYLAN

Intellects

"People who get in the news—like the Seekers and Bob Dylan—get the people looking through the folk records in the shops and that's a good thing. You now see young girls carrying Joan Baez LPs about and they don't look like folk fans.

"It will be great if the music catches on—people will listen to a song and get something from it instead of just thinking music is something to dance to. Getting something from a song—that's important.

"There are two kinds of listeners. One I call the intellects. They break down a piece of music, like a Dylan lyric, and pull it to pieces and try to work out how it was created. I don't dig this.

"The others are like a mod who never heard folk music but who digs my song on first hearing. This is music listened to with the same simplicity with which it was written.

Passion

"Those other guys try to break something down as though it was worked out over hours, not created in a second.

"They always want you to tell them what it means. It's up to them to decide what it means.

"I respect the little mod chick who digs one song, rather than the intellect who breaks it down."

Donovan was born in Glasgow but now lives with his parents at Hatfield in Hertfordshire.

"I left school when I was 15," he told me. "I then went to a Further Education college but I left before I took GCE. I've done quite a few jobs since then, digging holes in the ground and things, but I couldn't condition my mind to it so I went to the beaches.

"I have quite a big repertoire, about 300 songs. The Free Wheelers are recording one of my songs this week. A song starts out as an idea going round in my head. Maybe I get two or three ideas that could be the start of three songs. Then they get sort of knocked together. Sometimes I write them down—I don't mean on manuscript, I can't read music."

Donovan put on his Dylan hat and left the Office—no doubt to inflame a few more passions.—BOB DAWBARN.

MELODY MAKER, March 20, 1965—Page 3

DOUBLE EXPOSURE ON THE FOLK SCENE

FOLK is busting out in all directions—and in particular into the Pop 50. And the two spearheads of the folk invasion into pop fields is being led by Bob Dylan in America and Donovan in Britain.

The Box Office for Dylan's London concert at the Royal Albert Hall on May 10, opened on Saturday. By Monday, his agent Tito Burns, was telling the MM: "There has been a tremendous rush for tickets and I predict they will all have gone by the end of this week.

"And remember there are 5,000 seats with a top price of £1."

IS HE GOOD?

Dylan's first single, "Times They Are A Changing", reaches the shops tomorrow (Friday).

Donovan's first record, "Catch The Wind", was released last Friday and has already jumped into the Pop 50 at 36. He has just signed a contract that could earn him £25,000 this year.

The MM spoke to both stars this week. Dylan was forced to admit he had never heard of Donovan. "Is he good?" asked the American star.

Donovan has certainly heard of Dylan. "It should be good when Dylan comes over," he enthused. "I've bought my ticket to see him. It will be great to see him splashed across the papers.

"Dylan's record should be big. I have heard it, of course—it's off his LP and it's a great number.

"I think the bit about me imitating Dylan is beginning to pass over — although there are probably some fleece folkers still on about it."

Is Dylan worried at the thought of being copied by other artists?

"It doesn't bother me" he told the MM.

We put to him a question from Donovan: "Do they credit you with as little intelligence as they credit me with in Britain?"

Said Dylan: "In the USA, I don't think they credit me with having any intelligence, whatever that word means, but I think they do in England."

Donovan is still regarded with suspicion by the British folk world. Does he plan to work any folk clubs?

"They can't afford me!" he laughed. "I would like to do a few of them to show there are no hard feelings."

What difference has success made to their lives?

"None" says Dylan. "I stay out of it."

"None, really" says Donovan. "I'm not buying a car or anything like that. But I am planning to get a flat."

● DONOVAN

● BOB DYLAN

DYLAN v. DONOVAN

Donovan has now written some 50 songs and is in demand by other recording artists. Dylan isn't interested in writing for other people.

"I don't really write for other people at all" says Bob. "I did 12 or 13 new songs for the album that's just coming out. And I guess I have another four or five new ones about recorded for the next record."

Dylan has just finished writing a book on Hollywood with photographer Barry Feinstein.

"It will be out in the Fall," he told the MM. "I'm down in the country now, working on another book. I'm putting it together. It's not really a novel, just bits of information. It's called 'Bob Dylan Off The Record'."

"I'm also doing some concerts with Joan Baez before I get over to Britain. And would you please say hello to Martin and Dorothy Carthy."

Is there going to be a folk boom?

"I don't know what that is really, a boom," laughed Dylan.

"I don't think there is really a chance yet," said Donovan. "It could happen this year but it will come through slowly, not in a sudden, big way. But there are certainly some interesting developments in the pop charts."

Dylan said he didn't know "Times They Are A Changing" was being released in Britain. Does he hope for a hit with it?

"Not really" he says, "I don't really have any connection with it now."

Whatever they say, a great deal more is going to be heard of both folk D's during 1965.—BOB DAWBARN and MAX JONES.

"I don't really know what a boom is"

BOB DYLAN

Top Cosy and Top Service at BARRATTS

NME, 26 March 1965, page 8

Life-lines of Donovan

NAME: Donovan Philips Leitch
BIRTHDATE: May 10, 1946
BIRTHPLACE: Maryhill, Glasgow
PERSONAL POINTS: 5ft 8in; 9st 12lb; green eyes, black hair
PARENTS' NAMES: Donald and Winifred
BROTHER: Gerry (youngest)
PRESENT HOME: Hatfield
INSTRUMENTS PLAYED: Guitar, harmonica, kazoo
WHERE EDUCATED: St Audrey's Secondary Modern, Hatfield and the Campus, Welwyn Garden City
MUSICAL EDUCATION: Self-taught
AGE ENTERED SHOWBUSINESS: 18
FIRST PUBLIC APPEARANCE: The Cock, St Albans
BIGGEST BREAK IN CAREER: Meeting my managers
TV DEBUT: *Ready Steady Go!*
RADIO DEBUT: *Saturday Club*
CURRENT HIT AND LATEST RELEASE: 'Catch The Wind'
DISC LABEL: Pye
PERSONAL MANAGERS: Peter Eden and Geoffrey Stevens
BIGGEST INFLUENCE ON CAREER: Thousands of things – I extract the goodness from all that I can. Woody Guthrie and Bob Dylan I respect a helluva lot.
FORMER OCCUPATIONS: Just tramping around, travelling and singing
HOBBIES: Singing and playing and listening to cool jazz
FAVOURITE COLOUR: Tangerine
FAVOURITE SINGERS: Guthrie, Dylan, Hedy West, Julie Felix
FAVOURITE ACTORS/ ACTRESSES: Jean-Paul Belmondo, Richard Burton, Julie Christie
FAVOURITE FOOD: Scampi, mushrooms and chips
FAVOURITE DRINKS: Milk, vodka and lime
FAVOURITE CLOTHES: Anything I've got
FAVOURITE BANDS: John Renbourne, Davy Graham
FAVOURITE COMPOSERS: Guthrie, Dylan, Stravinsky, Mingus
FAVOURITE GROUP: Cops And Robbers
MISCELLANEOUS LIKES: A beach, a pipe and a girl
MISCELLANEOUS DISLIKES: People who laugh when they want to cry and vice-versa
BEST FRIEND: Gypsy Dave
MOST THRILLING EXPERIENCE: Being high on the rocks at St Ives at sunset
TASTES IN MUSIC: Everything with soul
FORTHCOMING DISC PROJECT: An LP
ORIGIN OF STAGE NAME: My christian name
PERSONAL AMBITION: To live 'til I die and fill in the space in between
PROFESSIONAL AMBITION: To keep writing and singing

SINGLE

MM, 18 December 1965, page 21

DONOVAN
Catch The Wind
Pye

Very Bob Dylan-ish, but once you've got over the shock of that, a really pleasant record of this controversial singer's composition. It has a haunting, plaintive quality, and he sings perfectly in that nasal Dylan tradition. It must be a hit.
Ray Coleman

RETNA

DYLAN: FASTEST SELL-OUT YET

MM, 27 March 1965, page 7

Signs are that Bob Dylan's coming British tour will be among the quickest sell outs known to local promoters, a healthy omen for those many who believe Dylan to be one of the most creative talents to appear on the folk scene in years. Only two box offices have opened so far. Both sold all their tickets in double quick time. London's Albert Hall started selling on the Saturday. By mid-day Monday, they had standing room only, and by four o'clock, they had sold out completely. Tickets for Manchester's Free Trade Hall were snapped up almost as swiftly.

The next box offices to open are at Sheffield City Hall and Leicester's De Montfort Hall. Readers in those parts anxious to see Dylan are advised not to hang about. In view of this current commotion, it is ironical to consider that Bob Dylan was here in 1962 – doing a play – when he visited the Troubadour and other London folk clubs without apparently making much of an impression.

Dylan is in many ways a fantastic figure – a good deal of fantasy creeps into a song like 'A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall' – and fantastic figures attract legends and fanciful notions. My telephone conversation with him went like this:

I hear you have a very successful record out there?
"Oh, do I?"

Yes, I'm told it's a tremendous success called 'Subterranean Homesick Blues'. What's it about?
"It's just a little story really. It's not about anything."

Has this single made any difference yet?
"No."

Do you realise that you've started something of a cult and The Beatles have been praising your work?
"Not really."

Did you notice George Harrison's comment that they admire "the Dylan way of life?"
"No, I didn't. I think that's kind of weird."

What do you think of The Beatles, as artists and people?
"Oh, I think they're the best. They're artists and they're people." ***Max Jones***

Long ago, far away: Dylan relaxes in a Sheffield hotel, April 30, 1965

DYLAN GIVES LABEL A BOOST

– and gets into singles chart!

NME, 26 March 1965, page 12

Everybody said if they issued a Bob Dylan single – up to now he's only had albums released – it would get into the charts. They did, it has – 'The Times They Are A-Changin" is Dylan's first-ever single hit. It's also the first hit for CBS since they had their own label.

Nowadays everybody is talking Bob Dylan. John Lennon is heavily influenced to the extent of writing occasional material and singing in the Dylan manner. Donovan, too. The Animals came back from New York full of an evening spent with the folk singer.

John Lennon is heavily influenced to the extent of writing material and singing in the Dylan manner. Donovan too

Which is as it should be. For if we are in for a folk boom then Dylan could provide the spark *and* most of the impetus. Dylan was born in 1941 in Duluth, Minnesota. Now he is an informally dressed – never wears a tie – folk singer lionised throughout the world. And argued about.

Because 'The Times They Are A-Changin" is a protest song, like his other hit composition, 'Blowin' In The Wind', people put him down as a singer of songs protesting about the way the world is run. About 'Blowin' In The Wind' Dylan said: "I still say that some of the biggest criminals are those who turn their heads away when they see wrong and know it's wrong."

But Dylan isn't only a protesting singer; he is right in the tradition of folk music. And the folk music tradition has its influence on Dylan, too. He has been a wanderer since very early in his life, starting at the age of ten he ran away from home seven times, visiting South Dakota, New Mexico and California.

He went to the University of Minnesota on a scholarship for only six months. "I flunked out," he says. "I read a lot but not the required readings." But it was here that he started folk singing in the Scholar, a coffee house near the university. Then he was heavily influenced by blues artists like the phenomenal Leadbelly and Big Joe Williams, plus some R&B names like Bo Diddley and Chuck Berry.

Dylan went wandering again, this time to New York where he visited a father figure of white folk music, Woody Guthrie. Guthrie has been ill with a nervous disease since 1954. He receives visitors in the Greystone Hospital, New York. Dylan visited and when he appeared back at the university, it was Guthrie, Guthrie, Guthrie. He sang Guthrie's songs, played in the Guthrie manner and even talked like him. Later, of course, more Bob Dylan found its way into his music, but Guthrie still remains a shaping force. John Hammond, director of talent for CBS, discovered Dylan for the disc world. Years ago he also got disc companies interested in Benny Goodman and Count Basie. Dylan attended a rehearsal for another folk singer that Hammond wanted to record. Up until this Dylan found it difficult to work steadily at singing – he even occasionally slept in shop doorways. Now Dylan works exactly when he wants to, gets around $2,000 a performance, but professes no interest in money. All he wanted from life, he once said, was "a couple of motorcycles, a new air-conditioner and four or five couches!" ***Ian Dove***

JERRY SCHATZBERG–CORBIS/MIRRORPIX

The Dylan I Know

by British folk singer Martin Carthy

Disc Weekly, 10 April 1965, page 4

I first met Bob Dylan in December 1962. He had come to Britain to appear in a BBC play called *Madhouse In Castle Street*.

But I first saw him when he strolled into the King And Queen pub, near Euston, where I was playing with a folk group called The Thamesside Four.

He sat sipping a beer and listened to the group. He said he liked us – and after that, we became good friends.

Bob Dylan is not a pop singer in the accepted sense. He writes and sings songs that broadly come under the category of social commentaries on our life and times.

He would never have set out to become a commercial success; he is far too much of a sincere person to do that. There is absolutely nothing "show-bizzy" about him. That he has become popular is purely incidental.

Money

He is completely unaffected by his sudden fame. Of course, he has made a lot of money from his songs and personal appearances. But this doesn't mean a thing to him.

He is just doing what he wants to do.

Just what sort of a person is Bob Dylan? Basically, he is very shy. Yet he will say what he believes. He's not very keen on reporters. And if they bug him with a lot of trivial questions, he will tell them to get lost – and in no polite terms!

Yet he has a marvellous sense of humour. It's very hip. He's not crazy about the usual TV programmes, for instance. Yet he digs the David Frost type of satirical humour. And his humour comes through in many of his songs.

He doesn't split people into blacks and whites. To him people are people. He accepts them as they come. He never really gets heated about anything. For instance, I don't think he would give a darn about the singers who have copied his style – both in America and Britain.

> "Dylan loves English pubs and is very good at shove ha'penny. He beat me at it – fancy an American doing that!"

He'll talk on any subject under the sun. Often during a conversation, he will appear preoccupied. You think he isn't listening to a thing you are saying. Then he will surprise you by coming up with a pointed comment.

Humour

He can be a great tease. He'll make fun of people – but in the nicest way. There is nothing malicious about him. He is too much of a humanitarian for that.

In appearance, he is rather short and not at all distinguished. He is usually dressed in jeans and a shirt. He doesn't wear a cap often. He dropped that years ago.

Yet, when he gets onstage he puts on an electrifying performance. Many singers sing better. And there are far better guitar players. But Bob Dylan has a style that is all his own.

But there is nothing contrived about his act. He doesn't rehearse every little movement like some artists. Usually, he will have no set idea of what he is going to sing next. He just sings the song best suited to his particular mood.

Bob is not a "purist" about folk music in any sense. He likes all forms – provided they are good. He likes The Animals, Manfred Mann and The Beatles. He likes what they do. And he likes them as people.

Girls

Girls? Bob has an eye for beautiful ones. The Scandinavian type. I know he thinks that Mary, of Peter, Paul & Mary, is really lovely.

He loves English pubs. He would often visit a little pub in Hampstead. And he is very good at shove ha'penny. He beat me at it. Fancy an American doing that!

He's not bothered much about different kinds of food. But he does have a weakness for prawns. He likes reading – especially poetry. And he is writing a John Lennon type book, I believe. He seems quite fond of animals.

Acquiring personal possessions doesn't bother him. He would not dream of having a swimming pool in his garden just because he had a lot of money. But he does live in a big house at Bearsville, just outside New York. It's right on the edge of a forest, and he tells how the deer come right up to his back garden and feed out of his hand.

He likes the secluded life. For this reason, he moved out of Greenwich Village. Phoney artists bug him. He was glad to get away from them.

To sum up, Bob Dylan is a thoroughly sincere person. He lives his own life – and lets other people live theirs. For my money, he's just a lovin' man. A regular guy and a wonderful performer.

Standing on the stairway: Dylan poses in New York, August 18, 1965

NME, babe: Dylan escapes the hurly-burly of his latest press conference

DYLAN FETED, BUT REMAINS UNMOVED!

NME, 30 April 1965, page 2

Dylan's here! The world's most talked about folk singer flew into London Airport on Monday for his sell-out tour. And somebody who looks less like a star than he does I've yet to meet.

DYLAN – small, hardly noticed when first he came in, shielding his eyes from photographers' flashlights. Dark glasses go on and off with every flash.

DYLAN – evading more questions than he answers, but more diplomatic than President Johnson's Press Secretary.

DYLAN – above all looking bored and strangely out of place against the luxury that surrounds him. Almost the little boy lost. Until you speak to him.

"I don't give the impression of being a star," he drawls, "because I don't think of myself as one."

This isn't the talk of a naive person. He believes it. Like when he says: "I've seen all these crazes come and go, and I don't think I'm more than a craze. In a couple years time I shall be right back where I started – an unknown."

A lot of today's stars secretly think this… none of them would dream of saying it! I go along with Dylan and ask him if he'll be sorry when it's over.

"Nope!"

Wouldn't he even miss the money?

"Nope! I spend most of what I get now, anyway – and how I spend it is my business. Not on material things. I don't need ten cars, a mansion and a yacht. Of course, I'd be a fool to say money means nothing to me, but I don't really care."

A battery of cameras fire. Dylan looks as it he's been hit, replaces his dark glasses. "All I'm really interested in," he says, "is singing to people who want to listen to me. And I don't care how many that is." Fortunately if not for Dylan, for somebody, thousands of people want to listen.

"I've seen all these crazes come and go. In a couple years time I shall be right back where I started – an unkown"

Born in Duluth, May 24, 1941, Dylan lived for the first 17 years of his life in Hibbing, Minnesota. By the winter of 1961 Dylan, still only 20, had sung his way through one half of the American States.

He later wrote: "I's driftin' an' learning new lessons. I was making my own depression. I rode freight trains for kicks. An' got beat up for laughs."

Finally though, Dylan reached the Columbia Records studios and cut his first album called simply enough 'Bob Dylan'. That was the start. A lot of authorities state that Dylan's been greatly influenced by that other folk great, Woody Guthrie. I shouldered into the throng to ask about it.

"My eyes and ears have been my great influence," he says. "Nothing or nobody else really. People who have tried to influence me have been so wrong. I don't know why – they just have been. And the same goes for me. I'm not trying to influence people. In fact I don't want to."

A voice, well in the background, asks him if he hasn't been influenced by Donovan! His press officer winces!

But Dylan's expression doesn't change. "Who is this Donovan? I'd never even heard of him until yesterday," he says. And he means it.

As more and more people squeezed into the room to welcome Dylan to Britain, he became more and more surprised at this acknowledgement of his popularity. Not that his face displayed much emotion.

"I seem to be more popular here than I am at home," he muses. "You could call me a Top Ten artist here but in America I'm only Top Forty."

With chart successes and a sell-out tour Dylan means big business and big money. And it's usually at this stage that the pressure to become intentionally commercial is applied.

But Dylan assured me it won't happen to him. "The only difference success has brought is that I now feel I must make my records even better. Before I made records to please myself and though I still do that I'm now also conscious that the public deserve the best I can give. This I owe them."

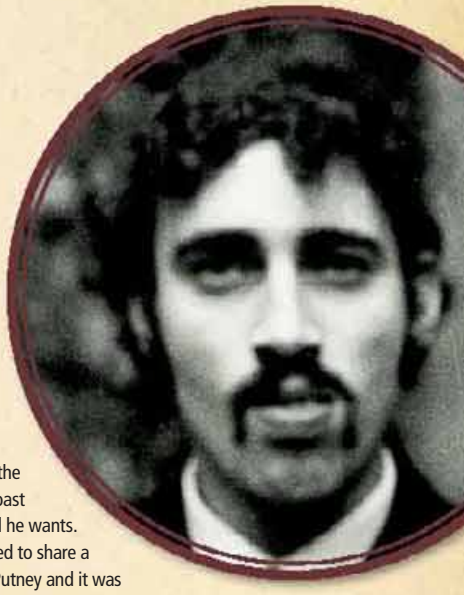
Even before it starts, Dylan's tour is one of the biggest successes an American artist has had for quite a while, but this apparently leaves him unmoved. But even if he gives the appearance of living in a world of his own, bored with the outside, he can't go wrong. To his fans he represents the rebel, the man who believes in the things they do. And acts the way they'd like to. I must admit that I liked him personally – if only because of his courage in remaining completely detached while being so lionised.

If he appears onstage and decides to stand on his head and not play a note during his entire tour, he'll still be loved. His fans will probably read something into it. ***John Wells***

PICTORIAL PRESS/POPPERFOTO

My friend DON

by Gypsy Dave, talking to Penny Valentine



NME, 13 March 1971, page 8

Gypsy Dave's real name is David Mills and he was born in Hatfield, Herts, in 1947. He lived at home with his parents and elder sister until he was 14 when he left to go to Torquay with Donovan.

From then until he was 17 he kept on returning and then leaving home, leaving notes around for his parents to find. "I was wicked. I used to make myself cry until the paper was soggy and it looked pathetic. I think my mother cottoned on after a few times, though!"

Shared interests

One time Donovan and his friend Gypsy Dave used to live in a pill-box in Hastings, until they tried to light a fire one cold night and smoked themselves out! Today they have just moved into a luxury flat in Baker Street in London. But their friendship still continues to flourish under these very different circumstances.

Dave, who was given his nickname by a chap called Dominic in Manchester, has been Donovan's friend for over four years and is now his road manager. In the early days they roamed England together with no job and no money.

"We met on an Aldermaston march one Easter," says Dave. "When we were kipping in the same tent. We had a gas time and have continued doing so ever since."

Meeting Dave is very much like meeting Donovan's brother. He has the same quiet voice and almost nervous mannerisms. He has the same dark curly hair and loads of charm. They share the same jeans and boots and anything they happen to have bought.

They share the same interests: records, books and chicks. The one main difference is that Dave has a rather tash beard and a thinner face.

> "I've been watching out for him to change so I could say 'now watch it', but there's been nothing"

Gypsy Dave calls Donovan "Don" and laughs loudly about riding in taxis.

"Don is great. Fantastic. He hasn't changed at all by this popularity. He's always been popular anyway wherever we've gone. Everybody loves him because he has such a nice personality. I've been watching out for him to change so that I could say 'now watch it', but there's been nothing.

"He wants to save money and buy a house on the Spanish coast – that's all he wants.

"We used to share a house in Putney and it was ridiculous. All our friends kipped on the floor and everywhere. It was nice to have all those friends, but we couldn't relax. Now we have this big flat which we share with some friends and there's plenty of room.

"We can all cook, fry-ups mainly, and we just do what we feel like. Either we eat in or go out or sit around listening to records.

"Don likes Indian music a lot – we have a lot of LPs like that. And folk stuff of course. He's just begun collecting things like records and books. Before this we had nowhere. Don and I just wandered around with a guitar and a kazoo, they were our prize possessions. It was a good scene."

His policy on life

"Now he has bought a record player and records and books. We both think Spike Milligan is great and have bought his new book of poetry and short stories. Don buys a lot of books that I can't remember the names of.

"He's interested in a lot of things he won't talk too much about because he doesn't want to get involved. He has this policy that whatever comes along he fits in with or fits it into his own way of life."

Donovan, a few weeks ago, parted with his guitar. This, says Dave, was a tremendously hard thing for him to do but that he did it to prove his friendship.

"It was his most cherished possession, that guitar. He'd hulked it all around England. But a friend of his needed one and he just gave it to him. He loved it but he valued that friendship so much he just had to give away the thing he loved best to prove it."

Works in the night

"He's writing a lot more stuff now. He likes writing songs and poems. He does a lot of work in the middle of the night because that's the quietest time. I've known him write stuff on a train, too. He just brings out his box – that's what he calls his guitar – and starts singing."

Extraordinarily, Donovan's life today is not really very different to the life he has always led – except that he is continually being mobbed by fans.

"The nice thing is that everyone likes Don. I have to charge through crowds making a passageway for him towards the door to get him through – it's quite a thing.

"We think this life is great. A laugh. It's tremendous because Don is doing what he likes most in life – travelling the country and singing… and getting paid for it!"

Donovan in '65: mad about Saffron, clearly unimpressed by crimson

Dylan and Joan Baez pose outside the Savoy Hotel, London, April 26, 1965

Page 8—MELODY MAKER, May 8, 1965

FACES OF FOLK*

SECOND PART OF A BASIC GUIDE TO THE BOOMING FOLK SCENE

*THE AMERICANS

HUDDIE LEDBETTER is to folk music what King Oliver is to jazz. It is impossible to assess, in the days when folk music and jazz went hand in hand, how many people were drawn to a serious study of blues, gospel and folk music by the earthy singing and hard-hitting guitar of Leadbelly. Born in Louisiana around 1885, he grew up in Texas picking cotton, breaking horses and serving a lot of years on prison farms, where he was lead man on the gang mic assimilated much folk material.

● HEAR HIM on "Good Morning Blues" (RCA RD7567).

WOODY GUTHRIE, at 53, is perhaps the most-loved singer on the entire folk music scene. Countless thousands of young singers who have never heard him off record owe their love and knowledge of folk music to this wonderful man who lies dying of an incurable disease in New Jersey. Though he was born in Oklahoma, and the memories of hard years in the dustbowl coloured his antler life, his songs weren't restricted to any one state. His inspiration was the working man everywhere. Above everything, he was anti-fascist.

HEAR HIM on "Bound For Glory" (Topic 12T31.)

ALAN LOMAX, though not a bad singer, is first and foremost a folklorist —once described as "a shadowy figure whose time seemed to be shared between Washington's Library of Congress and the prison farms of the South." Then, in 1950, he came to Britain where he joined local folk singers, musicians and eccentrics, in laying the foundation for the British revival. Probably no one has a wider knowledge of the world's folk music, from North African camel drivers' songs to Creole jazz. ● TRY THE collection of prison songs, "Murderers' Home", to be reissued shortly by CBS.

PETE SEEGER, with some accuracy, has been called the father of the folk song revival. Hear him on record and he doesn't appear a great singer. But to listen to him in person is to be spellbound — not merely by his phenomenal instrumental technique but by his passionate devotion to folk and their music. As with Guthrie, folk song is not an art form, an end in itself. Unless it has something relevant to say about the lives of everyday people, it is nothing. His whole philosophy is summed up in his 1963 "Klown Sweater Thru Wine".

● HEAR HIM on "Folk Songs by Pete Seeger" (Capitol W1721).

JOAN BAEZ, currently touring Britain with Bob Dylan, is one of America's most respected singers. Of Mexican and Irish descent, she has a serious approach to folk singing (she can, incidentally, span three octaves) and is a sensitive guitarist. She made her first big impact at the 1959 Newport Folk Festival, and today her concerts sell out as fast as the Spinners' do over here. An ardent civil rights worker, she took part in the recent Selma demonstrations and, as a pacifist, she ran into trouble with the tax authorities when she withheld her 1963 taxes as she objected to the use of her money for defence purposes. ● HEAR HER on "Joan Baez/5" (FONTANA.)

JUDY COLLINS' career follows the pattern of many young American singers. A classical musical education was discarded at the age of seven and an interest in folk music fostered at college. Despite her rural background, as Judy says: "If I belong to any tradition at all it is the city tradition, one with its roots in urban life. What I know about folk music I have learned from my contemporaries and not from a traditional family background." The scene today is in the universities, with a hundred singers just like Judy Collins. Can the colleges and the singers sustain it, build on it and add something to the stream of Western folk music? ● THE ANSWER may lie in records like "Judy Collins No. 3" (Elektra EKL260).

BOB DYLAN is a cult. And it's a great shame, but the only question which really matters is whether, after the boo-ha has died down, Dylan will survive in the same way as Guthrie and Seeger. So some of his melodies aren't original. Neither were many of Guthrie's. So many of his protests have been accepted by the pop establishment. Are they any the less valid for that? George Harrison said: "The thing about Dylan is, he doesn't give a damn." The thing about Dylan is he does give a damn, for how long? That's the question that will decide Dylan's ultimate worth. ● HEAR HIM on "The Times They Are A'Changin'" (BPG used).

SCREAMS FOR DYLAN

MM, 1 May 1965, page 3

Bob Dylan got the full star treatment at London Airport on Monday night. A mainly young crowd of about 150 created chaos as the 24-year-old "folk poet" left the customs hall.

Some wore Bob Dylan hats; some showed CND badges; they carried autograph books and copies of his newest hit, 'Subterranean Homesick Blues'. They carried him – pulling at his hair and tugging at his clothes – into a press conference. He looked a bit white and shaken, but he laughed it off. "It was OK – they didn't hurt me. They just gave me a haircut. I'm ready to get drunk now!"

Looking round through a mob of police and TV and radio men, Dylan said: "I want to make sure my friends got through." These included Joan Baez, his manager Al Grossman, and publicist Ken Pitt – nursing a bleeding hand after the melée.

Mocking

Earlier, baggage had been sent flying in the airport foyer; a pane of glass smashed; and Lena Horne went by totally unnoticed.

Wearing sunglasses, black jacket, open-necked blue denim shirt, jeans and black leather boots, Dylan was in mocking mood as he faced the journalists' questions.

He parried queries about his friendship with Joan Baez – and asked if he would marry her, Bob said, "I might marry her arm."

A few minutes earlier, Joan Baez stood a few feet from him, Dylan was asked if she was over here with him.

"Yes I think she came along," he said.

Then the press asked these questions.

Are The Beatles on the way out?
"They will never be on the way out – you know that."

"No, I don't write *about* anything."

Did you play amplified guitar on 'Subterranean Homesick Blues'?
"No. I played my own guitar. I just fool around with amplified sometimes."

How much do you think The Beatles contributed to your wide success here?
"I find it very hard to understand the meaning of the word success. I don't understand commercial success either. I like The Beatles – I think they are the best. I don't know what they said about me, or anything."

> Dylan sat throughout the conference brandishing an outsize lightbulb. He refused to be drawn on its significance

Have you ever heard of Donovan?
"Donovan what?"

How long will your British concert last?
"About an hour and a half."

What numbers will you include?
"I don't know yet."

Have you written any songs about Britain since you were last here?
"No not about that, I didn't write 'Mrs Brown You Have A Lovely Cheese' (*Smiles*)."

Have you ever written anything about Vietnam?

Which pop singers do you like?
"I don't really know too many other pop singers. I've just got my own things to do."

Did you write any songs on the plane?
"I made a few notes – I call it stabbing the paper."

What is your message?
"Keep a good head and always carry a light bulb. (*Dylan sat throughout the conference brandishing an outsize electric light bulb. He refused to be drawn on its significance.*)"

Bob then had a question to put to us. "Where's Christine Keeler?" Someone asked if he wanted to write a song about her. "No, I just want to meet her," said Dylan.

Truth

But why had so many young people made the long journey out to the airport on a miserable wet night, to meet Dylan?

Said Roy Wiffin, aged 20, of Hounslow West: "I think he has great quality in his songs – and I don't think he needs The Beatles as his publicists. He isn't a great singer at all – but he does sing the truth."

Pamela Barron, record shop assistant of Swanley, Kent: "I know all his records but I've never seen him." What did she think of his 'Subterranean…' single? "No – a mistake," she said.

Back in the conference room, Dylan was still being prodded about Donovan. "Where is he, this Donovan?" said Dylan. "Let's get him out of here – put him on the wall!"

And before making a fan-evading sprint to the car taking him to London's Savoy Hotel, Dylan shrugged. "Oh, to be a simple folk singer again."

BUT HE DIDN'T LOOK AS IF HE MEANT IT.

Max Jones and Ray Coleman

PICTORIAL PRESS

DYLAN

● On the track "Black Crow Blues" on the LP "Another Side Of Bob Dylan" Dylan plays harmonica and piano at the same time.

● He has very simple tastes in food. In the smartest restaurants he always plumps for things like milk and chicken—and he's terrified of going in. He always wonders if they will let him in.

● His jeans are especially tailored for him. Apart from his black blazer, his other favourite clothes are striped shirts with tab collars, but no tie. He likes purple cufflinks and high-heeled boots.

● Dicky and Kenny Rankin often turn up to Dylan's sessions —Kenny actually accompanied on "Subterranean Homesick Blues."

DYLAN on stage

Pop idol?—Not unless you get the message

ON Saturday Liverpool won the Cup. On Saturday Bob Dylan appeared at the Liverpool Odeon. Quite a coincidence—but many of the fans who packed the theatre were no more from Merseyside than Dylan himself.

They had travelled from as far away as South Wales and at least three dozen fans were hitch-hiking from venue to venue.

Nearly everyone was in their seats at least ten minutes before the curtains parted on, what, save for three microphones, a high stool with a selection of harmonicas on it, and a glass of water, was an empty stage.

Two white spotlights hit this grouping, then, from between the plain backcloths, strode Dylan, dressed in black leather jacket, nylon polo - necked sweater and midnight blue slacks. He wore a harmonica cradle round his neck and a guitar swayed around his middle.

He went straight into "Times They Are A-Changin'," and the audience stayed absolutely quiet, just listening.

He went unannounced into his second number, at the end of which he took advantage of the glass of water.

About his next number, "Gates Of Eden," he quipped dryly: "That's just the title." There was no smile on his face as he said it; just a simple announcement. In fact the whole thing about Dylan spells simplicity.

The messages of his songs are simple, but definite. About the things that matter to him, like God and life and death and love.

clear

And unlike on some of his records, on stage you can understand every syllable Dylan sings.

And it is what he sings and the words he uses that count—not the scraggy-haired man, the music, the voice, the guitar or the harmonica. These are just instruments which Dylan uses to put across the message.

He opened the second of his two three-quarter hour spots with "Bad Dreams" — another favourite with the audience. During this number he changed the words slightly to bring in a reference to Donovan which brought laughter from the audience and the first smile from Dylan.

Time and again it was the message which drew the applause.

"Now Ain't The Time For Your Tears" assured him of at least one encore. This was "Be Friends With You."

But the audience still wouldn't let him go and called for more, including "A Hard Day's Night."!

"It's All Over Now, Baby Blue" was what they got as his final offering.

It was over and the audience began to file out. Unlike the laughing, smiling, chatting people at other concerts everyone was quiet and solemn. They had been entertained and were now meditating on the songs.

Rod Harrod sees the concert at Liverpool

DYLAN in the studio

He only records at night!

ONCE every four months in Studio A on Seventh Avenue, New York a small shock-haired figure dressed in jeans and blazer stands with a huge sheaf of notes in front of a microphone. Around him are six or seven of his friends. He brings them along because he says he cannot sing to nothing and nobody.

The figure is, of course, Bob Dylan. A man who is so precise, so businesslike about his recordings that he has been known to cut a whole LP at one session!

This week, in his London hotel, I talked to the man who organises and is in charge of these sessions—Dylan's recording manager Tom Wilson.

"Dylan will only record at night—usually around seven in the evening," he told me. "He brings with him a collection of friends. His manager Al Grossman and his wife, Joan Baez and her secretary.

admirers

Often during session admirers of Dylan's work will show up. People like blues singer John Hammond Jnr., famous harmonica player John Sebastian and jazzman Miles Davis.

"Recording Dylan is really a pretty simple matter," went on Tom, "because he already has things so worked out before he actually comes into the studio. Also since on most tracks he accompanies himself there are no musicians to organise.

"He brings several harmonicas in different keys and two guitars with him and we always have a piano at hand so that if he feels like using it he can. The most important thing is to get the mikes placed so that there is plenty of room for Dylan to move around the studio without knocking things over or tripping himself up!"

He has such a definite concept of what he wants on record that things go very smoothly and that was how they managed to get "Another Side Of Bob Dylan" all recorded during one eight hour session.

Dylan has become more and more interested in the actual presentation of the record. He now designs his own covers and decides what sort of pictures he wants on them. He also titles the albums.

Penny Valentine talks to his A and R manager

and just DYLAN

Time off—at the zoo!

IT'S been "all systems go!" for Bob Dylan since he flew into London Airport from New York to a frantic reception on Monday of last week.

He got in at 9.35 p.m. to be greeted by over 1,000 fans. A Press reception at the airport with scores of newspapermen and photographers was followed by a broadcast in B.B.C.'s "Town Scene." He was then driven to London's Savoy Hotel in an Austin Princess.

More interviews in the Conference Room and he finally got to bed around 2.30 a.m.

On Tuesday he had a light French breakfast of rolls, marmalade and coffee. Then more interviews.

That evening, Bob Dylan went to John Lennon's house in Weybridge for dinner and to see a film. He stayed there till about 4 a.m.

interviews

The following day there were still more interviews until 3 p.m., when he went with friend Joan Baez to West End hostmaker Ancilo and Davide. There he ordered some high leather boots in black, also brown and grey suede boots.

Then came one of his few trips out — to Regents Park Zoo. It was back to the hotel around 5 p.m. — then another meeting that evening with the Beatles.

On Thursday he slept late, then started work on preparations for his British concert opening at Sheffield the following day.

Plans for the rest of his stay? He wants to do some shopping and look around the club scene.

L.H.

"Like a hobo who has tried to smarten up": Dylan in the UK, 1965

A BEATLE-SIZE FEVER WITHOUT THE SCREAMS!

MM, 8 May 1965, page 10

Outside Leicester's De Montfort Hall last Sunday, a religious fanatic carried a banner saying "Prepare To Meet Thy Doom".

He walked among the 3,000 people pouring into the hall to see Bob Dylan's concert. It was a weird sight and an uncanny juxtaposition.

The man's message had a peculiar relevance. It was not doom the people were going to meet, however; it was something less final and more pertinent.

Dylan, the most important folk singer of today, was on parade through Britain for the first time. And a big percentage of the crowd were there to find out how commercial success had affected the man whose early fans had not expected hit records.

A Dylan fever is sweeping the country and only a British sentimentalist would deny that it is approaching Beatle-size proportions. But without the king-sized screamers.

It was a complicated fan scene at Leicester last Sunday. Some came in Dylan caps and jeans; others in suburban charcoal grey suits. Some extremists were barefoot and had haircuts that made The Beatles look bald.

Students were out in force. Many had hitch-hiked hundreds of miles and arrived with haversacks featuring a flask poking out of the corner.

There were some untamed pop fans. But they were in the minority. Dylan commands a vast audience of thinkers.

Uproar

When this slight, serious faced and incredibly casual man walked onstage – with a guitar, seven harmonicas and two glasses of water his only company – there was silence. At the end of every song, the audience applauded – thunderously. No screams, no whistles, no talking. The applause almost switched off almost mechanically, like it was canned.

Only one aside by Dylan caused hilarious uproar. In the middle of his brilliant searing 'Talking World War III Blues', Bob half sang: *"I turned on my record player – it was Donovan"*. The crowd booed their resentment of Donovan. Dylan came back with "whoever Donovan is".

His stage tactics are nil. He sips water – somebody must have forgotten the Beaujolais – and almost bows after each song.

He wore a black leather jacket over a grey jumper, blue trousers, brown suede shoes and a harmonica harness throughout. He looks like a hobo who has tried to smarten up.

Bob relies entirely on the words of his songs to get across. And his words are the very heart of reality.

They are stark, real, cunning and biting. Whimsical, brilliantly descriptive, subtly funny and often poetically romantic. Above all these things, they are important social commentaries.

Bob relies on the words of his songs and his words are the very heart of reality

Potent

In his dressing room afterwards, Dylan asked what impression he wanted the audience to leave with, said: "No impression. I just hope they're happy and don't feel cheated".

He brandished a shillelagh and evaded 300 young girls mobbing his car. He half smiled. One got the feeling he didn't quite dig that.

But let's forget all about cults: Dylan has caught the mood of this generation. And only foolish reactionaries will put him down.

Ray Coleman

PIC POP PROBE

what the fans thought of Dylan

YVONNE WILD (19), Banbury: Much better than I thought it would be. What I like are the words he puts into his songs. They mean something. And he sings them as if he means it.

MIKE DRAPER (18), Banbury: He writes great satire, and I like the way he knocks at the president. He picks on anything, like segregation. He's better on stage than on records.

MARTIN BEER (18), student, Leicester: "It's the atmosphere he creates—that's the main thing. He's much better in person than I expected. I like the way he plays with words.

MM, 14 May 1965, page 14

CAUGHT IN THE ACT

Different Dylan

THE Albert Hall — even full, as it was on Sunday evening — cannot be numbered among the easiest or friendliest of auditoriums in which a solitary young man can deliver a story, a dream, a cautionary song or a clarion call for sanity.

But Bob Dylan strolled onto its bare platform, looking in some odd way like a mysterious troubadour who'd lost his horse, and quickly and quietly took over the vast, respectful audience with his weirdly compelling songs.

Dylan doesn't bother to appeal in ordinary stage terms. Clearly anti-showbiz, he makes the plainest announcements when he makes any at all. "This is called 'The Gates of Eden'."

Now and again the humour creeps through — less often this time than when I saw him in London last summer—but most of the pleasantries (such as: "This story's true: I took it from the newspapers") are familiar from last year, and in a sense the funny bits are there to heighten the anger, indignation and affection which seem to jostle around in his nature.

As before, the dominant impression is of a man devoted to freedom and determined to scourge social and political injustices with his weapons: ringing words, odd and unpretentious tunes, and a personal technique fully adequate for the ideas and intense feelings he wishes to communicate.

No sense in muttering about not very good harmonica or guitar. It isn't relevant to what Dylan's doing. The guitar parts are quite varied, and he sort of swings.

What is more important, the one thing doesn't get in the way of the other; we hear the songs out without being distracted, and we believe in the singer. Dylan is as convincing as a thunder storm. He may not entertain you, but he can make you smile and stop smiling.

MAX JONES.

Marianne Faithfull tells about a party with Dylan and Joan Baez

NME, 14 May 1965, page 14

The colourful combination of Bob Dylan, Marianne Faithfull, Joan Baez, John Myall and "a nice fat man called Albert" (Dylan's manager) met to dispose of Indian curries in a London restaurant last Tuesday.

When I talked to Marianne at Decca studios in London, she seemed bemused as to how the meeting occurred.

"I know people like Manfred and his wife, Sue, who knew Dylan before," she explained, "but I believe it was John Mayall who first phoned and mentioned I was in town. Dylan invited me to dinner after saying that he wanted me to appear on his TV show."

Marianne admitted that her singing style was very much influenced by Joan Baez. She bought an LP of the Newport Jazz Festival on which Baez sang two songs. Since then Marianne has bought Baez LPs by the bundle.

"I couldn't believe it when I actually met her," she said. "She's so beautiful, with that gorgeous golden skin and those lovely blue eyes.

"She insisted on singing her high, vibrato version of 'Here Comes The Night', which Dylan complained about. He hates her voice and tells her so. At one point he held up a bottle as she sang a high note, and drawled, 'Break that!' She just laughed.

"I think her voice grates on him because it is so pure. She hits such perfect high notes that sometimes they can hurt your ears. My dog can't stand her singing, and every time I play her records he sits back on his haunches and howls."

In the late evening the party moved back to the Savoy Hotel, where Donovan joined the festivities. He played and sang for almost the entire evening at Dylan's request.

"It's a shame that people are so patronising towards Donovan," said Marianne. "He can be hurt so easily, and people are doing it all the time."

The party went on into the wee small hours, and after Donovan had sung 'Blowin' In The Wind' for the umpteenth time, Dylan played Marianne some of his own LPs.

"Bob hates Joan's voice and tells her so! Every time I play her records my dog sits back on his haunches and howls"

"After every track he would ask, 'Did you understand what I was getting at?' or 'What was that all about?' I got quite flustered. He has this huge pile of 'cue cards' with the meanings of his songs written on them, so that if anyone asks what 'Subterranean Homesick Blues' is about, he just holds up the appropriate card. Great!

"He's not terribly witty, and takes himself very seriously. Really, he is a poet." ***Keith Altham***

Dylan and Baez: shattering perceptions and glass in 1965

VAL WILMER-REDFERNS/JOHN BYRNE COOKE/REX FEATURES

SINGLE

NME, 28 May 1965, page 4

DONOVAN
Colours Pye

Whatever you may think of the Dylan-Donovan controversy, there's room for both of 'em in the charts – and Donovan will be back there again soon with his second single, 'Colours' (Pye).

The lyric explains how he associates certain colours with things he cherishes, and it's set to a guitar and banjo accompaniment, with harmonica interlude.

Slightly faster than 'Catch The Wind', and without strings, it's a much simpler ditty – yet Don's uncomplicated approach is strangely moving and sincere.

I see no reason why this shouldn't do as well as his last.

Flip: a more forceful projection of one of his LP tracks, 'To Sing For You' is not so tuneful as the top side. Both numbers self-penned.

Derek Johnson

BOB DYLAN
Bringing It All Back Home
CBS

NME, 14 May 1965, page 14

The more important Bob Dylan thinks his messages, the less time he puts into them. In his philosophic 'Gates Of Eden' and 'It's Alright, Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)', he sacrifices tune for an almost monologue style to punch his words across, which he does almost as if he is a politician. The sentiment is that of the young today, wondering why riches and power should be so important, when nature is there. On other tracks he gets more tuneful and less intense, with songs like 'Maggie's Farm', a rocking c-and-w number, or the swinging 'Outlaw Blues'. He punctuates his rather tuneless singing with his wailing harmonica. Backing group is good. Dylan, of course, composed all songs, some of them calling for some nimble tongue twisting, which he does to perfection.

Allen Evans

Dylan sacrifices tune for a monologue style as if he's a politician

DONOVAN
What's Bin Did And What's Bin Hid
Pye

NME, 14 May 1965, page 14

Britain's folk singer has a much softer touch, is more tuneful and dreamy than Dylan. He sings six of his own tunes, arranges three others. No deep philosophy, but some relaxing sentiment. Donovan has a lovely sound about him that is most appealing. His guitar and harmonica playing, too, is soft and quiet. Simple backing is good, including ex-Shadow Brian Locking on bass.

Allen Evans

Donovan has a much softer touch, is more tuneful and dreamy than Dylan

Broke down ending: Dylan shows his affection for the UK, 1965

MR SEND-

The most fantastic interview the amazing Bob Dylan has ever given! Shock treatment! That's what the folk singer dished out to Laurie Henshaw last week at his suite in the Savoy Hotel

Disc Weekly, 22 May 1965, page 6

Dylan rebels against convention. It's obvious in his songs and it's obvious when he talks. He speaks his mind and no holds barred. You remember that riotous send-up of a press conference in *A Hard Day's Night* when a girl asks George what he calls his haircut and gets the casual reply, "Arthur"? Well, that's how this interview with Dylan went. This week Laurie Henshaw and *Disc Weekly* have been 'Dylanised' and you can read the results for yourself in what is without a doubt the most amazing interview that Dylan has ever given.

Can you tell me where and when you were born?
"No, you go find out. There's many biographies and you can look to that. You don't ask me where I was born, where I lived. Don't ask me those questions. You find out from the other papers."
I'd rather hear it from you.
"I'm not going to tell you."
Can you tell me exactly when you entered the profession? When you first started writing songs?
"When I was 12."
And you were writing poetry at the time? And are you writing a book now?
"I've got a book done."
Is it already published?
"It's going to be published in the fall."
What's it called?
"I'm not going to tell you."
Can you give me an idea of what it is about?
"No."

Money

You must obviously make a lot of money nowadays…
"I spend it all. I have six Cadillacs. I have four houses. I have a plantation in Georgia. Oh, I'm also now working on some kind of rocket. A little rocket, not a big rocket. Not the kind of rocket they have at Cape Canaveral. I don't know about those kind of rockets."
Do you have personal things – cameras, watches and that sort of thing?
"No, I don't. I buy cars. I have a lot of cars. The Cadillacs. I also have a few Oldsmobiles, about three."

Politics

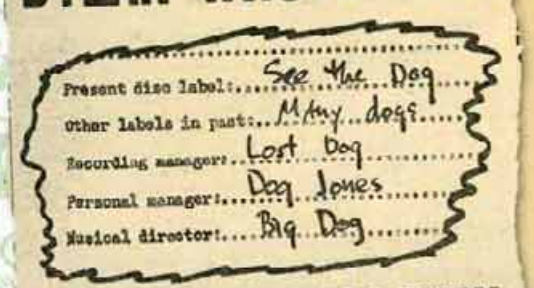
Do you have any fears about anything political?
"No."
Of course your songs have a very strong content…
"Have you heard my songs?"
I have. 'Masters Of War', 'Blowin' In The Wind'…
"What about 'Spanish Lover'? Have you heard that? Why don't you listen to *that*! Listen, I really couldn't care less what your paper writes about me. Your paper can write anything, don't you realise? The people that listen to me don't need your paper to listen to me. I'm not going to be known from your paper."
You're already known. Why be so hostile?
"Because you're hostile to *me*. You're using me. I'm an object to you. I've nothing against you at all. I just don't want to be bothered with your paper, that's all. I don't want to be part of it. Why should I have to go along with something just so that someone else can eat?
"Why don't you just say my name is Kissenovitch. You know and I – er – come from Acapulco, Mexico. That my father was an escaped thief from South Africa. You can say anything you want to say."

Clothes

Let's talk about you, your clothes for instance. Is your taste in clothes changing at all?
"I like clothes. I don't have any particular interest at all. I like to wear drapes. Umbrellas, hats."
You're not going to tell me that you carry an umbrella?
"I most certainly do carry an umbrella. Where I come from everybody carries an umbrella. Have you ever been to South Dakota? Well I come from South Dakota, and in South Dakota, people carry umbrellas."
What had been the greatest influence in your life?
"You! Your paper happens to influence me a lot. I'm going to go out and write a song after I've seen you – you know – what I'm used for. I feel what I'm doing and I feel what your paper does. And you have the nerve and gall to ask me what influences me and why do I think I'm so accepted. I don't want to be interviewed by your paper. I don't need it. You don't need it either. You can build up your own star.
"Why don't you just get a lot of money and bring out some kid from the North of England and say:

When a poet fills in a form, you can expect anything!

DYLAN WROTE THIS ON OUR LIFE-LINE PRO FORMA


Present disc label: See Me Dog
Other labels in past: Many dogs
Recording manager: Lost Dog
Personal manager: Dog Jones
Musical director: Big Dog

NME, 21 May 1965, page 4

It was probably idiotic of us to ask a poet like Bob Dylan to contribute to our Life-Lines feature. You can't expect an idyllic dreamer to do it as you or I might do it.

However back came the form, with two of the four pages of questions answered, five of which are on the left and others printed below:

FIRST IMPORTANT PUBLIC APPEARANCE: Closet at O'Henry's Squire Shop
OTHER DISCS IN BEST-SELLERS: 'I Lost My Love In San Francisco But She Appeared Again In Honduras And We Took A Trip To Hong Kong And Stayed Awhile In Reno But I Lost Her Again In Oklahoma'
CURRENT HIT: None that I know of
LATEST RELEASE: The Queens Are Coming
ALBUMS: Yes
EPS: None
FAVOURITE FOOD: Turkish Mervin (a form of egg-plant coming from Nebraska)
FAVOURITE CLOTHES: Nose-guards
FAVOURITE DRINK: Frozen tobbacco
FAVOURITE BANDS: Corky The Kid (Sombreros)
FAVOURITE COMPOSERS: Brown Bumpkin and Sidney Ciggy
FAVOURITE GROUPS: The Fab Clocks
MISCELLANEOUS LIKES: Trucks with no wheels, French telephones, anything with a stewed prune in the middle
MISCELLANEOUS DISLIKES: Hairy firemen, toe-nails, glass Mober forks, birds with ears
BEST FRIEND: Porky the wild elephant shooter
MOST THRILLING EXPERIENCE: Getting my birthday cake stomped on by Norman Mailer
PETS: My friend Lampa
PERSONAL AMBITION: To be a waitress
PROFESSIONAL AMBITION: To be a stewardess

'We're gonna make you a star, you just comply with everything we do. Every time you want an interview, you can just sign a paper that means we can write what we want to write. And you'll be a star and make money!' Why don't you just do that. I'm not like that. I'm not going to do that for you."

Why should we bother to interview you if we didn't think you were worth interviewing?

"Because I'm *news*. That's why I don't blame you. You have a job to do. I know that. There's nothing personal here. But don't try to pick up too much, you know."

When did you start making records?

"I started making records in 1947 – that was my first. A race record – I made it down South. Actually, the first record I made was in 1935. John Hammond came

UP

and recorded me, sitting on a farm. The man who discovered Benny Goodman saw me down the street. He had me in to do a session. Otherwise, I wouldn't have been here."

Manfreds

Have you heard Manfred Mann doing 'With God On Our Side'?

"I haven't heard it. I've only heard about it."

It was sung on *Ready Steady Goes Live.*

"I would like to have seen it."

"I don't want to be bothered by your paper. Why should I have to go along with something just so that somebody else can eat?"

What sort of people would you cultivate?

"I would cultivate the kind of person that sticks to his job and gets his job done. And is not too nervous, but nervous enough to not come back."

What kind of people do you take an instant dislike to?

"People that shake. An instant dislike – wham! Most of the time I throw them against a wall. I have a bodyguard."

Dylan here put his hands to his mouth and called to the next room.

"Toppo! Is Toppo in there? I have a bodyguard to get rid of people like that. He comes out and wipes them out. We wiped out three people last week."

Do you paint?

"Yeah, sure."

What sort of painting?

"I painted my house."

At this point, Bob Dylan abruptly ended the interview.

REX FEATURES

Bob Dylan transfers some of his thoughts onstage in 1964

The man who made protest the pop sound of the year

MM, 22 May 1965, page 11

Bob Dylan talks like an abstract painting, he sees his songs in pictures – it's hard to explain them away in just a few words. It's equally hard for anyone talking to him to keep track of his thoughts. His mind wanders, he evades questions. And he mumbles.

Ironically, this man so direct, forthright and explicit in his tremendous songs, becomes apparently confused when confronted with straight questions. Either that or he is infuriatingly obscure. His friends explain that he is just shy.

There were a lot of questions left unanswered last week after Dylan played his final sell-out concert at London's Albert Hall. In the peculiarly un-Dylan-like atmosphere of the Savoy Hotel, the slight, wild-haired young man – who had stunned thousands into silence as he sang – began to reflect on what was going on around him.

"It's hard for me to accept the silent audiences," he began. "Yeah, they're quiet in the United States too. I've been doing concerts over there for two and a half years but I don't know why – I feel somewhat bored with the audiences there.

"The message isn't in the words. I'm just transferring my thoughts into music. Don't put me down as a man with a message"

"Silent audiences don't exactly worry me, but I think a lot more about what I'm singing and saying when they're so quiet. You know, I was thrown into this situation. In the States there are different levels you work on. I work concerts, and also coffee houses and bars. People talk when you're singing, it's not that different."

Had Dylan been nervous on British stages? "Not nervous. Thoughtful. If I appeared nervous or tense, that was because I was kinda inhibited, y'know – standing there listening to everything I was doing. And I don't like to do that much."

Much has been said of Dylan "cult". His rebellious image; his torch against social injustice; his anti-establishment songs – all have helped to create an image of a young fighter devoted to getting freedom, hitting out at the older generation.

How did Dylan feel about this?

He sat in his room and lit a cigarette. He gazed at the floor. "If someone wants to believe something about me, they can. It doesn't matter a little bit to me.

"At one time it did. That was some years ago when I was on the streets and trying to make some impression. Right now, I don't care what people think – the cult is something other people talk about. Not me."

REDFERNS/ROBERT ATTMAN–RETNA

Image

"Everybody is motivated to act a certain way. I don't try to prove anything about myself. I just don't ask people to study me. I don't know what my image is now. I could change my clothes and look different, couldn't I?

"It's all a question of pictures. People may have had a picture of me when I used to wear that hat. I wore that hat when I came to New York City four or five years ago. I'd come from the Midwest where things are not the same.

"People don't grow up the same way, y'know? I find that here in England they are more ready, the young people. They don't have so much as they do have in the United States, where they take things for granted. I mean materially.

"I'm not saying which is better or worse. But there is one thing I could say about the United States that wouldn't happen in this country, England. Over there, you could get killed for having your hair long, if you're in the wrong part of the country.

"Now your Liverpool looks like the whole of New York's East Side, or Greenwich Village. But somehow I got the feeling that here I wasn't playing to that sort of people. Well I think England's more open minded, y'know.

"I don't think my British audiences were phoneys. I can't see a phoney audience being forced to accept a song like 'Gates Of Eden'. I don't believe that song could be accepted as a thing to do.

"And if they can take a song like that, there's hope for them, whatever sort of people they are, right?"

Bob was equally strong on the subject of his hit parade successes.

"If they attack me just because I have some success with records, then they're entitled to. But I'm equally entitled to disagree with them.

"Are these people trying to hate pop music or what? I don't hate pop music.

"Oh man, somebody's got to be a little bit wacky to say, 'I don't like electrified guitar'. What's wrong with electrified guitar? And drums? People say, 'How can it be folk music if you've got electrified guitar and drums?' Ha!"

"I have no responsibility to anybody except myself. If people like me – fine. If they don't, then maybe I'll do something else"

Message

"These instruments are real. I like them. Aren't they the things everybody uses when they start out? You don't start singing by yourself."

How did Bob write his songs? What exactly provoked the strong messages in 'The Times They Are A-Changin" and 'Masters Of War'?

"The message isn't in the words," Dylan replied. "I don't do anything with a sort of message. I'm just transferring my thoughts into music. Nobody can give you a message like that.

"All I can hope to do is sing what I'm thinking. Don't put me down as a man with a message.

"My songs are just me talking to myself. Maybe that's an egotistical thing to say, but it is what it is.

"I have no responsibility to anybody except myself. If people like me – fine. If they don't, then maybe I'll do something else."

Politics

"No politics. It would be just impossible for me to stand up and be associated with any political party. They are all crap – every single one of them is crap. They all think they are better than the next one. Huh?

"It's OK for someone who wants to be in a political party, but not me. They stand up there trying to tell me what is good and what is bad and what ought to be done.

"They've got a commodity to sell and that commodity is them. Politics is just a commercial bandwagon."

Future

"I have these things ready – plays and things. Nothing's finished. I live in the present. It's hard for me to look beyond today. Every time I try to do otherwise and plan for the future, it doesn't pay off. I know I'll write a lot of stuff, but exactly what shape it'll take has yet to be decided."

Poet

"Everybody has their own idea on what's a poet. Robert Frost, President Johnson, TS Eliot, Rudolph Valentino – they're all poets. I like to think of myself as the one who carried the light-bulb." ***Ray Coleman***

Baez: not so much a folk singer, more a politician

Joan Baez on the campaign trail in 1965

Melody Maker, 22 May 1965, page 3

If music journalists could interview Joan Baez every so often they'd probably stay sane, sober and serene for the rest of their lives.

In the artificial world of pop music, Joan Baez is something of a phenomenon. But then she doesn't really belong to that world at all – and still less does she regard herself as a phenomenon.

"First," she says, "you are a human being." And the way she says it suggests this is already something to live up to.

"I try not to consider myself in any business. I regard myself principally as a politician. I like being referred to as a pacifist. I don't mind being called a folk singer. But music is secondary to me."

Until about a year ago, Joan Baez avoided interviews. This week, when I tracked her down in Paris she was preparing to disappear into the country in search of peace and quiet.

"I don't mind so much now," she told me. "What I hate is having to protect myself commercially as a recording artist."

Didn't her singing success make it increasingly difficult for her to resist commercial pressures?

"Nobody has to do anything they don't want to do. If you want people baying round your car – that's OK, but I prefer a quieter life.

"Singing hasn't interfered with my trying to be a human being and I wouldn't let it. A lot of people, I know, are furious with me for meddling in politics – but it is cheating for me to pretend I am only a singer.

"Others have criticised me because I am not a traditional folk singer. Well, I wasn't born in a rocking chair – or whatever else you have to do to qualify as an authentic folk singer. But I like singing.

"As a matter of fact, folk music doesn't interest me very much. I rarely listen to it because most of it is so bad."

What did she think of the current boom in folk music?

"It doesn't do any harm except to bad groups and singers. The boom will come and go like all booms and afterwards, only the really important contributions will remain – people like Bob Dylan and Pete Seeger.

"Dylan is great. He interprets political songs so well – with understatement – and doesn't make them sound trite."

When it comes to listening to music at home Joan Baez fluctuates between the extremes of the classics and rock'n'roll.

She hates musicals. "The songs are so slick, phoney and contrived. Rock'n'roll music in all its banality is at least honest."

But what she loves most of all are life and people.

"I am principally interested in humanitarian things. I think the world is capable of many changes. All it needs is a willingness on our part to stop ourselves blowing ourselves up.

"I think the USA is ready for a revolution – but of course it must be a non-violent one. I would participate in anything right now that would stop the war in Vietnam."

There is nothing of the priggish do-gooder about Joan Baez. She's a girl of great charm and humility who is deeply concerned about humanity. ***Mike Hennessey***

Disc Weekly, 12 June 1965, page 8

DYNAMIC DYLAN!

Now millions of people can see what he is really like on two special BBC TV performances

On Tuesday of last week Bob Dylan taped his two shows for BBC TV. The previous session had been cancelled because of his illness and the programmes – at least half an hour each – are now scheduled to go out on June 19 at 10.50 and June 26 at 10.30.

Both shows are different, and in both he is entirely on his own. In fact, they will be just like his concert performances and that means DYNAMIC! as reporter Penny Valentine and Phil May of The Pretty Things discovered when they went to the taping.

It is a quarter to eight at the BBC studios in London. There is an audience of 300 but the place is very quiet as everyone waits for Dylan.

Mrs Al Grossman, Dylan's manager's wife, sits in the front row wearing a suit and leather boots. A fat man with a bald patch sits further along with a sketch pad. The Pretty Things sit in a line with intent faces.

Just past eight Dylan appears at the side of the studio. He wears a black leather jacket, dark sweater and trousers, his harmonica harness round his neck. He looks pale and tired after his illness. He ambles out round a camera to the applause and stops next to a bright red leather stool. He stands by the mic, tuning up. On the monitor screens above our heads appears the picture of a girl on a beach. Dylan adjusts his harness and plays the guitar softly as the cameras angle up.

June 1, 1965: Bob on the Beeb

Cue card

"Hey wait a minute," he mumbles, and a young man in a super-smart corduroy jacket suddenly appears from nowhere. "I can't see those cue cards," Dylan explains. "You'll have to bring them right up – I've got bad eyes."

They bring the cue cards nearer and he fixes another harmonica into his harness. The hot lights have affected the strings on his guitar again and he turns away from the audience, listening intently as he runs through the chords.

The young man in the jacket says that sounds fine to him.

"It doesn't to me," says Dylan. "I've got bad ears too!"

Some sort of magic seems suddenly to have hit the entire proceedings with Dylan's grin and joke. We all laugh.

The red stool is unused by Dylan throughout the two shows. He stands, feet slightly apart, head a little back. He makes no attempt at introducing the songs. His attitude is the same as he adopts at his concerts – that his audience should know his work without explanation.

The only time he does offer an introduction is on 'It's Alright, Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)' when he says the title and adds: "This is a funny song, ho, ho, ho."

Striking

The stool carries his extra harmonica and a crumpled piece of paper on which Dylan has written down the titles of the songs he will do. On the screens the face of Dylan alternates between hatred and love. He comes over strikingly well.

In the first show he sings effortlessly through songs including 'One Too Many Mornings' and 'She Belongs to Me'. In the studios he has a 15-minute break.

At rehearsals he did 'Maggie's Farm' and then decided not to sing it after all. His second show includes the very funny 'If You Gotta Go, Go Now' and 'Mr Tambourine Man'.

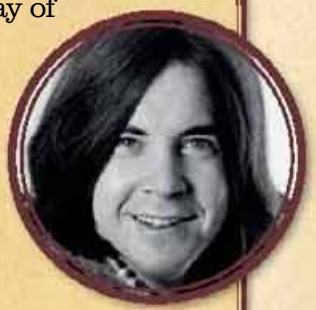
Inserts

On 'Mr Tambourine Man' there are filmed inserts of a fairground shown over Dylan on his guitar. At the end of the tapings Dylan crouches, his chin cupped in his hands, watching the credits coming over the monitor sets.

As the last glimpse of a now static Dylan face is shown on the set he stands up and looks satisfied. He says his thanks to the camera crew and once more to the audience and then quietly walks away. ***Penny Valentine***

THE FIRST TIME I'VE SEEN HIM LIVE AND I'M IMPRESSED!

By Phil May of The Pretty Things



I'd never seen Dylan live before and I was tremendously impressed. He knocked me out. We were there all afternoon watching him rehearse and he never sings one song the same way twice.

It was a complete joy to hear him do 'Boots Of Spanish Leather' three or four times and the nearest he got to doing it the same way as on his LP was at the actual taping. I've never heard anything so fantastic.

I thought his voice sounded a lot stronger than on his records, and his timing is perfect. The way he picks out one person in the audience to aim the verse at, and then times that verse for them, knocked us out.

And he has a way of evoking sympathy from the audience. He had me on the edge of my seat all the time he was tuning his guitar. I really felt for him.

And at one part I thought "if he knocks the mic with that harness once more it will be the end", because there was such an atmosphere of perfection that one more tiny mistake and you could feel the thing might collapse and he'd stop and never start again.

We met him during the rehearsals and had just a few words with him. He seems tremendously nice. We didn't stay long because he didn't look very well and we could see the strain on him.

He had been doing camera positions and starting and stopping all afternoon. I know what it's like when you feel tensed up as he obviously was – somebody just says one thing too much and you blow right up.

You know, I've been a Dylan fan for a long while and I can still remember the time when I took Dylan records to parties and people threw things at me!

The trouble was that at that time most of my friends were very interested in folk music, but only in the folk of Woody Guthrie, Big Bill Broonzy and Jack Elliott. They thought of Dylan rather as the Elvis Presley of folk!

And John Stax and I, when we weren't working – used to take a boat out on a lake with a portable record player and a load of Dylan LPs and play his records over and over again very loudly – until our time was up!

MM, 5 June 1965, page 5

DYLAN AND THE BYRDS

INTO the Pop 50 at 37 this week flew Hollywood's Byrds. They're friends of Bob Dylan, seen here sitting in with them during a West Coast concert. And the song that has seen them "home" is a Dylan favourite, "Mr Tambourine Man". Says Bob of the Byrds: "They are good musicians—they know what they are doing."

PICTORIAL PRESS/REX FEATURES/HUGH THOMPSON

Donovan wonders which way to run after escaping from Strangeways, 1965

DONOVAN WROTE SONGS IN PRISON

AUTHENTIC DONOVAN CAP
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This cap is made of strong, blue denim, with elasticated back to fit any size. PLUS a free photograph of Donovan.
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FREE TELEVISION

NME, 11 June 1965, page 9

Nothing about Donovan is easy to understand when you first meet him. He can be deep; but open. Friendly; but cynical.

This is how I found him in an amazingly frank conversation this week. He told me: "I write songs and poems everywhere. Man, they just come into my head.

"The police in Manchester arrested me before I got known. I was thrown into Strangeways for two weeks. I wrote two songs while I was cooped up in there.

"They accused me of breaking into a cinema and stealing 5,000 cigarettes. But when the case came up I was acquitted. My trouble was, they relied on evidence they shouldn't have done. I'd been framed, but the law didn't know that," he alleged.

Those were out-of-the-rut days for Donovan.

He told me candidly: "I don't see much of my parents. It's not a row. We just don't speak the same language. There's nothing there for me, man. So I left home.

"Sure, I've slept rough. Lots of times, in old houses, on beaches and derelict sites. You don't like it when you're doing it, I wouldn't recommend it.

"In fact, I wouldn't recommend the life at all. It's not fun. Live like that and you either turn out to be mad or a genius."

I asked him how he thought he would turn out himself. He thought deeply. "I don't know, man. I'm working a few things out with myself. I just don't know yet. There's a lot to do an' a lotta time."

Would he ever give up those faded denims and wear a suit? "I don't think so," he told me, "not for long. I couldn't take much care of a suit. Too much bother. I might change, though. Who knows? Everyone has a right to change his mind. It's a personal privilege."

Talk to Donovan for long and you get used to the flat staccato way he speaks and the direct way he puts his views. I like him for this. He might not be an interviewer's dream but seems almost utterly honest.

> "I'm not a Dylan fiend. We're both in the same business, he seems to like what I'm doing and I like him"

I asked him how he felt about the Dylan Vs Donovan controversy. Was he tired of it all by now? How did he feel about Bob Dylan personally?

He pushed back his blue denim cap. "Some of it's a bit sick," he told me. "I don't like the hecklers. Who would? Some of them want to kill me.

"I think I've convinced some people I'm not a Dylan fiend. Bobby's a good fella and I've met him often on his stays here. Now we've talked he remembers me from last time he came over. He has a fantastic memory.

"What else can I say? We're both in the same business, he seems to like what I'm doing, and I like him."

Money doesn't interest Donovan at all. "If I flopped, I'd only be sorry for the people behind me. I might buy a big house and look after my friends, but that's it.

"I look at myself like this; I'm an easy-going guy, and I don't want to do anybody down. I just want to show what I can do." ***Alan Smith***

DYLAN, ME, AND THE LEGEND OF WOODY GUTHRIE

Max Jones meets Ramblin' Jack Elliott

MM, 29 May 1965, page 6

"You know what knocks me out this time?" asked Jack Elliott. And promptly answered himself, "All these photographs of Bob Dylan and Joan Baez… it's wonderful. Elliott, who isn't billed as Ramblin' Jack very often these days is back in Britain for a tour which opened yesterday (Wednesday) at Acton Town Hall.

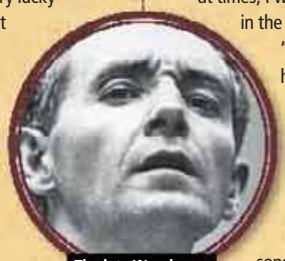
He came here first in September 1955, and sort of commuted back and forth over the next six years. After a stay in the States, he was in Britain again in '63. How does he see the scene then and now?

Scene is changing

"When I first came here there weren't too many people singing my kind of things. I guess I was very lucky coming over at the right time. There was a big interest in blues and folk music, what they called skiffle.

"Now, I think the folk scene here is changing. Everyone told me, 'Going to England? You'll have a great time there. You're going to do well'. I hope they're right. Anyway, seeing these big pictures of Dylan is a gas. He's very photogenic.

"When I went back to the states – '61 I think it was – that was the first time I met Bob Dylan. Those were his early days. He was about 19 then, and didn't even have the black corduroy cap."



The late Woody Guthrie: inspiration for Ramblin' Jack and Bob Dylan

Hobo songs

"He had this one shirt that he always seemed to wear – I guess it never got laundered. It was another part of the Woody Guthrie legend.

"One of my reasons for going back to the States was to visit Woody in hospital. I visited him and there was Bob Dylan. I kind of thought he was imitating Woody but he said he wasn't, that he learned those songs from various hobos he met on the road.

"So I didn't argue about it. I dug him, and I guess he reminded me of myself a little when I was younger.

"In those days he had a repertoire of wonderful hobo songs, some of which I had never heard before. He was singing worse than I was at the age of 20, but although he hurt my musical ear at times, I was the loudest clapper in the audience.

"I wanted to applaud him for stepping into the Guthrie-Cisco Houston tradition. And later, it was a gas seeing him make money, which I'd never done.

"Now he's a prolific songwriter. So prolific he hasn't time to sing many of his old songs because he's putting down new ones all the time.

"A lot of people say his songs are full of images that don't mean anything. It's like abstract painting. Some people don't have the imagination to appreciate something a bit vague. Woody wasn't vague, and that's one way Dylan has departed from him."

Ramblin' Jack Elliott lifts a glass to Dylan and the resurgence of folk music

Better than all the nest: The Byrds (clockwise from top left) Gene Clark, Jim McGuinn, Michael Clarke, David Crosby, Chris Hillman

The Byrds —

NME, 16 July 1965, page 8

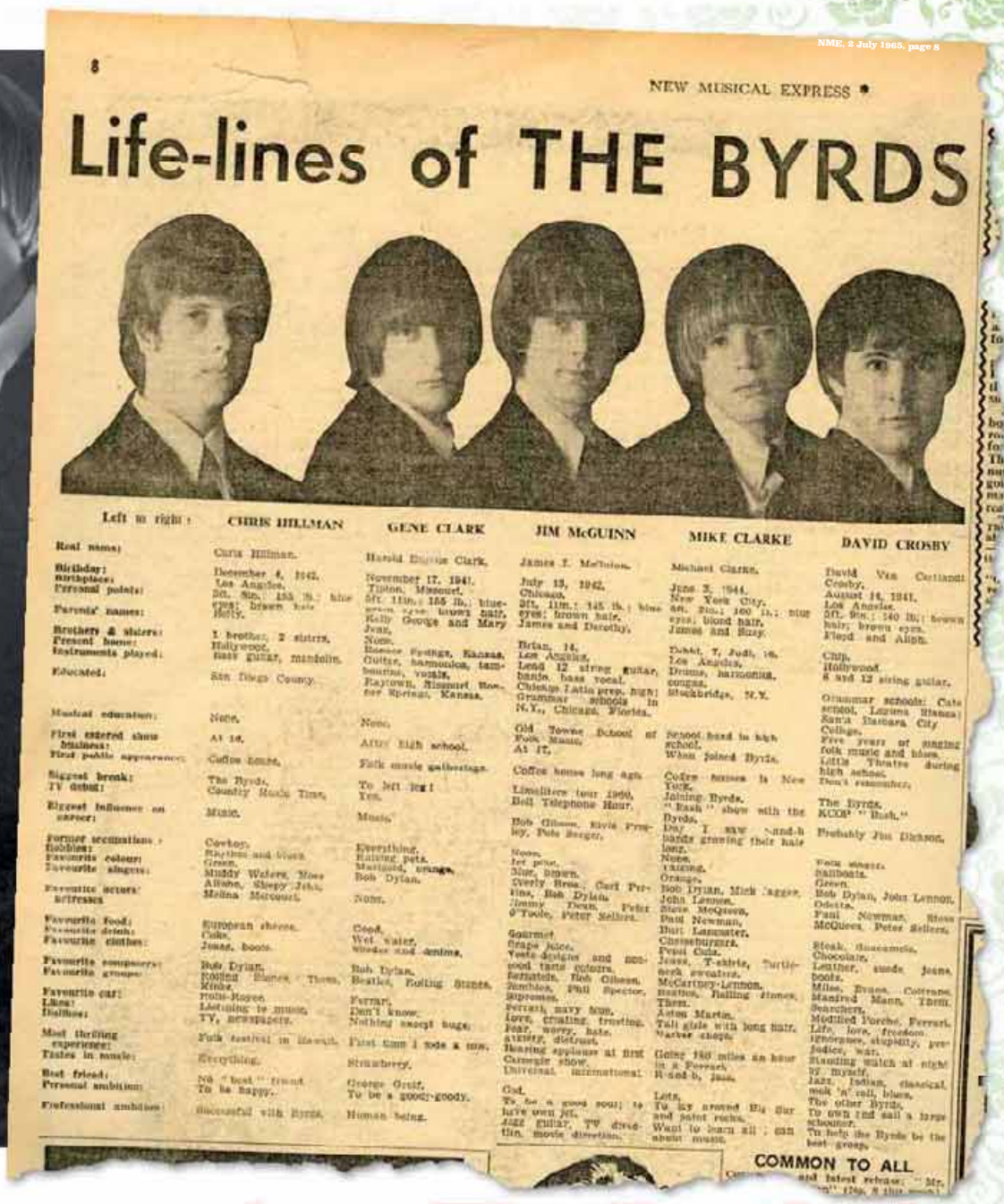
Unless I am very much mistaken August is going to see Britain gripped by a new phenomenon – BYRDMANIA. Stand by for the biggest explosion of hysteria since The Beatles first sent love 'From Me To You', when The Byrds fly in from Hollywood to cash in on the success of this week's haunting chart-topper.

Mothers should take heed of the warning and lock up their daughters, for I have it on good authority that the group has Pied Piper habits, and at this very moment birds are following Byrds by the coach-load across the breadth of America.

Leader of The Byrds' disciples is a bearded artist named Carl who – to quote Byrds publicist Derek Taylor – has "wild, black hair sprouting like corkscrews from his enormous domed head".

It appears that Carl achieved considerable fame in Hollywood without even engaging a press agent by being unpaid dance leader wherever The Byrds played.

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES–REDFERNS/JOHN BYRNE COOKE



NME, 2 July 1965, page 8

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NEW MUSICAL EXPRESS

Life-lines of THE BYRDS

Left to right: CHRIS HILLMAN, GENE CLARK, JIM McGUINN, MIKE CLARKE, DAVID CROSBY

	CHRIS HILLMAN	GENE CLARK	JIM McGUINN	MIKE CLARKE	DAVID CROSBY
Real name:	Chris Hillman.	Harold Eugene Clark.	James J. McGuinn.	Michael Clarke.	David Van Cortlandt Crosby.
Birthday: birthplace: Personal points:	December 4, 1942. Los Angeles. 5ft. 8in.; 155 lb.; blue eyes; brown hair. Shy.	November 17, 1941. Tipton, Missouri. 5ft. 11in.; 165 lb.; blue-green eyes; brown hair.	July 13, 1942. Chicago. 5ft. 11in.; 145 lb.; blue eyes; brown hair. James and Dorothy.	June 3, 1944. New York City. 6ft. 2in.; 160 lb.; blue eyes; blond hair. James and Suzy.	August 14, 1941. Los Angeles. 5ft. 9in.; 140 lb.; brown hair; brown eyes. Friend and Allen.
Parents' names:	Harry.	Kelly George and Mary Jean.	Brian.	Dabbit.	Chip.
Brothers & sisters: Present home: Instruments played:	1 brother, 2 sisters. Hollywood. bass guitar, mandolin.	None. Elsmore Springs, Kansas. Guitar, harmonica, tambourine, vocals.	14. Los Angeles. Lead 12 string guitar, banjo, bass vocal.	7, Judi, 16. Los Angeles. Drums, harmonica, congas.	Hollywood. 6 and 12 string guitar.
Educated:	San Diego County.	Raytown, Missouri Non-ner Springs, Kansas.	Chicago Latin prep. high; Grammar schools in N.Y., Chicago, Florida.	Stockbridge, N.Y.	Grammar schools: Cate school, Laguna Blanca; Santa Barbara City College.
Musical education:	None.	None.			Five years of singing folk music and blues.
First entered show business: First public appearance:	At 16. Coffee house.	After high school. Folk music gatherings.	Old Towne School of Folk Music. At 17. Coffee houses long ago.	School band in high school. When joined Byrds.	Little Theatre during high school. Don't remember.
Biggest break: TV debut:	The Byrds, Country Roads Time.	To hell with it! Yes.	Limeliters tour 1960, Bell Telephone Hour.	Coffee houses in New York. Joining Byrds.	The Byrds.
Biggest influence on career:	Music.	Music.	Bob Gibson, Elvis Presley, Pete Seeger.	"Bash" show with the Byrds.	KCBF "Bush."
Former occupations: Hobbies: Favourite colour: Favourite singers:	Cowboy. Rhythm and blues. Green. Muddy Waters, Moe Alsbee, Sheep John Melina Mercouri.	Everything. Raising pets. Marigold, orange. Bob Dylan.	None. Art prior. Blue, green. Everly Bros., Carl Perkins, Bob Dylan. Jimmy Dean, Peter O'Toole, Peter Sellers.	Day I saw Sandi's hands growing their hair long. None. Driving. Orange. Bob Dylan, Mick Jagger, John Lennon. Steve McQueen, Paul Newman, Burt Lancaster. Cheeseburgers. Pepsi Cola. Jeans, T-shirts, Turtle-neck sweaters. McCartney-Lennon. Beatles, Rolling Stones, Them. Aston Martin. Tall girls with long hair. Marker shops.	Probably Jim Dickson. Four wheels. Sailboats. Green. Bob Dylan, John Lennon, Odetta. Paul Newman, Steve McQueen, Peter Sellers.
Favourite actors: actresses:					
Favourite food: Favourite drink: Favourite clothes:	European shoes. Coke. Jeans, boots.	Good. Wet water. Winter and ermine.	Gourmet. Grape juice. Yoots designs and mod-cool tasty colours. Sarnatch, Bob Gibson, Ronettes, Phil Spector, Supremes. Ferrari, navy sun. Love, creating, trusting. Fear, worry, hate. Anger, distrust. Hearing applause at first Carnegie show. Universal international. God. To be a good soul; to have own jet. Jazz guitar, TV direction, movie direction.	Going 180 miles an hour in a Ferrari. Rand-D, jazz. Late. To fly around Big Sur and point rocks. Want to learn all I can about music.	Steak, guacamole. Chocolate. Leather, suede jeans, boots. Miles, Evans, Coltrane, Manfred Mann, Them, Searchers, Modified Porche, Ferrari. Life, love, freedom, ignorance, stupidity, prejudice, war. Standing watch at night by myself. Jazz, Indian, classical, rock 'n' roll, blues. The other Byrds. To own and sail a large schooner. To help the Byrds be the best group.
Favourite composers: Favourite groups:	Bob Dylan, Beatles, Them, Kinks.	Bob Dylan, Beatles, Rolling Stones.			
Favourite car: Likes: Dislikes:	Rolls-Royce. Listening to music, TV, newspapers.	Ferrari. Don't know. Nothing except bugs.			
Most thrilling experience: Tastes in music:	Folk festival in Hawaii. Everything.	First time I rode a cow. Strawberry.			
Best friend: Personal ambition:	No "best" friend. To be happy.	George Orsic. To be a good-goody.			
Professional ambition:	Successful with Byrds.	Human being.			

COMMON TO ALL

biggest craze since The Beatles!

So impressed were the group's managers at the frenzied results he achieved that they hired Carl to accompany the Byrds on their US tour and he now superintends the coach parties (I'm not joking) of fans who tag on after each Byrds show to follow them to the next city.

Whether or not Carl will be brought along with the band when they visit England next month I'm not sure – The Byrds were still "thinking about it" when their leader, Jim McGuinn, telephoned me from California the other day.

Mothers should lock up their daughters — at this very moment birds are following Byrds by the coachload across America

What I did learn is that these five musicians, who have enjoyed more success with a Bob Dylan composition than ever Dylan has, are more than keen on their forthcoming visit to Britain.

"We wanna buy some mod clothes in Carnaby Street – then we'll be able to look even more English. And I wanna meet John Lennon, he sounds like a man after my own heart. Who knows, maybe we'll even come home with English accents. Crazy."

I said I would duly warn Carnaby Street and Lennon and, if they cared, lay on a visit to an English castle for added authenticity. They didn't care.

Though it was 3.16 in the morning in Hollywood and The Byrds had just exhausted themselves playing at Jane Fonda's party, I managed to glean the following information:

The group has plans to make a film later this year, writing the script – and possibly even directing – themselves. Should be fun.

The Byrds were with The Rolling Stones on their last US tour, but "although we didn't fight, I don't think we really got through to them, or them to us!" ***Chris Hutchins***

The "quite nice fellows" in 1965 and (inset) their mate Mick Jagger

BYRDS EYE VIEW!

By Mick Jagger, who met them on the Stones' US trip

Disc Weekly, 10 July, 1965, page 6

"They're quite nice fellows – very English types really. Long hair and all that." That was the calculated answer Mick Jagger gave me when I asked him last week what he thought of The Byrds, who were one of the supporting groups on the Stones' last tour of America.

"They were on the tour for about a week while we were round the West Coast. They used to go on each night just before us.

Breakdown

"One night before we were due to be playing at San Diego, the car we were travelling to the theatre in, broke down. This made us half an hour late arriving at the theatre and so The Byrds had to stay on stage to keep the audience entertained," Mick explained.

"By the time we eventually got there they had run out of all of their own numbers and were playing ours. What a gas!"

Mick told me that The Byrds played nearly all Bob Dylan numbers.

"They're quite nice fellows – very English types. Long hair and all that"

"Their manager is a very close friend of Dylan and so he often hears his numbers before Bob has recorded them. This was the case with 'Mr Tambourine Man'," he said.

"They first recorded the number about five or six months ago. They did it in march time and didn't like the results. So they kept it on one side and didn't release it. Then they re-recorded the number and the result is this hit." ***Rod Harrod***

Disc Weekly, 31 July 1965, p15

THE BYRDS
All I Really Want To Do
CBS

I think this is a marvellous song. Dylan is the only man around who would write love lyrics like *"I don't want to classify you"*. I also think this is a very good follow-up to 'Mr Tambourine Man'. I also know that this will be a gigantic hit – partly because of The Byrds' visit which will probably put them down in posterity. The voices are there again just as good as before and the backing is excellent. But, Byrds fan though I have always been, I prefer the Sonny & Cher recording of this particular song. Still, never mind, CBS can rest easy in the knowledge that they have captured the most important group since The Beatles on the pop scene today and that this record will prove it. 'I'll Feel A Whole Lot Better' on the flip. ***Penny Valentine***

Disc Weekly, 24 July 1965, page 6

THE BYRDS

by the JONES boys

"I'M not concerned whether "Mr. Tambourine Man" is folk music or not. I just like it. It's the only record of the Byrds I have heard, but it made an immediate impression on me when I first heard it on Radio London.

I'm not a purist or anything about folk. In fact, I loathe and detest folk music.

So I wouldn't want to be drawn into a discussion as to whether Dylan's "Mr. Tambourine Man" is better than the Byrds' version. Or vice versa.

I prefer Dylan's recording — but not because it is more "genuine," and less of a pop record.

I wouldn't even say "Mr. Tambourine Man" is folk — or that even Dylan is folk. What is folk, anyway? Maybe you and me walking down the street and singing is folk!

If I had to generalise about folk, I would say it is more in keeping for one man to sing folk songs than groups. You know, the one-man against the world bit, like Dylan or Donovan.

GOOD

But even if people consider that "Mr. Tambourine Man" is a folk song — just because it is composed by Dylan — and that it should be sung by Dylan or a so-called folk singer, I wouldn't agree.

Not only is it a very commercial record. It's very good, too. And I still think this despite

the opinion of the Ivy League's Ken Lewis that the record is technically terrible.

BEATLES

I wouldn't argue with Ken on technical grounds. But he has some very strange ideas. He even thinks our group is good.

Are the Byrds influenced by the Beatles? I shouldn't say so on the strength of listening to one record. They've certainly got less of a Beatles sound than, say, Wayne Fontana, the Hollies or the Dave Clark Five.

I can think of 20 groups more like the Beatles than the Byrds.

I am looking forward to meeting the Byrds in person. I have seen their photograph, and I think they succeed in looking like what the Pretty Things are trying to look like."

Paul Jones

BYRDS Jim McGuinn and Mike Clark. Brian Jones thinks Mike is very much like him.

"WE spent seven nights with the Byrds when we were in California, so I had plenty of time to get to know them — especially Mike Clark, who plays drums and guitarist Dave Crosby.

They are very nice fellows. Mike is very much like me, only much taller. We were always being mistaken for each other and we seemed to be meeting the same girls!

I went to dinner with Dave a few times, and we talked about the music scene in Britain. The Byrds seemed very anxious to make it in England even more so than in America.

NIGHT

Before they were known in Britain — long before their record was released — I predicted it would make No. 1. I'm very glad that it has — even though it took a little time to get going here. It was slow for the first two weeks, then it shot up.

Like me, the Byrds are night people. They like to stay out late.

Dylan thinks a lot of the Byrds. I met Dylan at his hotel while he was in London, and he was playing "Mr. Tambourine Man" all the time. He just loves the sound of them.

It seems that the Byrds have

brought the folk music technique to the electric guitar group sound — sort of given folk a rock 'n' roll sound.

They are great on the Dylan stuff, but off it, they do tend to sound like second - rate Searchers. But I wish them all the best in Britain. They are very nice fellows.

They don't go in for any showmanship on stage — but I wouldn't like them if they did. They are very static, in fact.

But, spearheaded by the Who and the Yards, there seems to be a new rave of groups. Now it's the Byrds!"

Brian Jones

Ode to the high flying Byrds!

Disc Weekly, 14 August 1965, page 7

It was the moment of truth, 'Mr Tambourine Man' had rattled its way to Number One. The country had been buzzing with news and views of The Byrds.

How potent and significant they were. How they were now re-asserting the American sound in the American chart previously dominated by our boys. How different they were from any who had gone before. And now they were to walk out on the stage of the Croydon Fairfield Halls, last Thursday evening. And sink or swim, by what they could do in person.

Welcoming screams

The Byrds walked out on to a hearty wall of welcoming screams. Actually they didn't walk on, they wandered on with that unique air of detached vagueness.

Each move by each Byrd was calculated. They drifted around the stage in a seemingly aimless fashion. Nothing was hurried, everything was casual, but everyone knew what they were doing and did it on time.

Chris Hillman took the far left position on the stage. He was on a higher level towards the back and stood there straight back and slim, guitar at the ready. In front of him, slightly towards the centre was Dave Crosby, resplendent in that dashing Robin Hood-cum-*Count Of Monte Cristo* cloak and sparking off appreciative squeals from the girls before he started playing and singing.

Drummer Mike Clarke sat down at his kit parallel with Chris. Like Dave, he's part of the sex image of the group, with a Brian Jones-type hair-do.

'Mr Tambourine Man' himself Gene Clark was centre front and leader Jim McGuinn took the far right front position, glancing owlishly over and through those small-lensed shades of his which surely must start a new optic fashion.

Immediately impressed

Predictably, the first song was Dylan's 'The Times They Are A-Changin''. The Byrds instrumental sound was there, vibrating around the auditorium, but what happened to the words? The boys were singing directly into their mics, but there was no definition. The tune and the chord progression was there, but the words were nowhere.

They wandered onstage with that unique air of detached vagueness. Nothing was hurried

One didn't get unduly alarmed by that. After all, some of the LP is indistinct and inaudible. One watched The Byrds' stage playing technique, and was immediately impressed.

Chris is undemonstrative and functional, Dave is a constant showpiece, with that cloak twirling and billowing in an audience-winning style, Mike broods over his drums, Gene is the nonchalant mobile showman of the team and Jim stands and plays and sings, keeping movements to a minimum and hidden behind those grotesque specs.

Exchanged glances

Second number was Jackie DeShannon's 'Don't Doubt Yourself, Babe', and again the words were lost in a barrage of confused sound. The Byrds' casual coolness was not dented, but they exchanged glances between themselves.

A girl darts on stage towards Mike Clarke, kisses him quickly on the cheek, bends and seems to adjust part of his drum kit, and then withdraws, waving to Chris Hillman as she goes.

Was she a spontaneous invader or was she fixed to serve a dual purpose of fan ardour and drum adjustment? Nobody was telling.

'Mr Tambourine Man' gets a great reception, and the words are as clear as the record version. The Byrds remember the audience arranged behind the stage and Dave and Jim turn to face them for part of the number.

Once you could hear them adequately, you knew for sure that they place emphasis and importance on the lyrics of the songs they sing and are not just sound merchants. ***Nigel Hunter***

Caped crusaders: Hillman, Crosby and McGuinn onstage

REDFERNS/LFI/CORBIS

MM, 17 July 1965, page 3

Strictly for the

Derek Taylor, ex-Beatles press officer, now lives in Hollywood where he holds the same job with The Byrds. Here he gives the story of the group's rise to chart fame – exclusive to *Melody Maker*.

The Byrds happened. Suddenly, with little enough warning for any of us. For me, it started a couple of days after I arrived in Hollywood in February, when a cameraman I had met on The Beatles' tour sauntered into my then uncluttered office and dropped a couple of pictures casually on my desk. "There's a group here you may like to look at," he said. "They're called The Byrds. They may be lousy for all I know."

I had come to California to work on as a press agent. I had two clients – both rock groups. One was Paul Revere & The Raiders, the other The Beau Brummels. All long-haired. So here was a third. Nothing was known about them. They hadn't performed together in public as a group. They hadn't released a record. They weren't good looking. And they had no money at all. Very promising.

However, I called their manager and he came into the office. His name was Jim Dickson, a roly-poly man, prematurely bald, who had been an A&R man for folk singers. He had a kind smile and gentle eyes and he looked honest. Which is something in Hollywood. He too, was broke. But, he said The Byrds were pretty good and Columbia Records had recorded them with a number called 'Mr Tambourine Man'. He had a copy of it and he played it to me. Bob Dylan, he explained, had written the song and had approved The Byrds' version. I said, "I think it's a hit." And he said, "We think so too." They were due to make their first public appearance for $10 each at Ciro's, a large, unfashionable night club on Sunset Strip.

Difficulties

It was the haunt of Errol Flynn and Humphrey Bogart in their brawling prime, and of Van Johnson and Cary Grant and a thousand glamorous ghosts. So I went to see The Byrds. They had unimaginable mechanical difficulties – amplifier breakdown, inadequate microphones. Collectively, they had never faced an audience and they were shy, ill at ease, and not at all a unit. Yet something was happening onstage. It was something over and above normal rock experience.

> They hadn't released a record, they weren't good looking and they had no money at all. Very promising

I offered to represent them for a few dollars a week just for the hell of it. But manager Dickson and his partner, Eddie Tickner, a slim cautious man who used to work for the US Army Audit Dept, said: "Stick around and keep smiling, but we can't afford to pay anything yet." I stuck around and stuck out and offered to take a percentage of the group's income. Finally, Tickner and Dickson agreed and I was in.

'Mr Tambourine Man' was released in America in April. Radio Station KRLA in Los Angeles liked it and the city's Beatlemaniac disc jockey, Dave Hull, decided to pick it as his "Tip For A Hit".

I went into print in the station's newspaper to forecast it as a nationwide Number One. Five weeks later, it had bounded in leaps of 30 places to the top of all the national charts – *Cash Box*, *Billboard*, *Record World*, plus hundreds of local lists. By the end of June, The Byrds were the pop music talking point of America.

They were featured on the front cover of all the trade newspapers. Their fan club members were numbered in thousands. And both sides of their second American release 'All I Really Want To Do' and 'I'll Feel A Whole Lot Better', are, at this moment, climbing rapidly to replace 'Mr Tambourine Man' at the top.

RETNA

Sweethearts of the gazebo: the early Byrds (worm not pictured)

JIM McGUINN

LEAD GUITAR. Group leader, he toured for two years with the Chad Mitchell Trio and for one year with Bobby Darin.

DAVID CROSBY

RHYTHM GUITAR. Had performed as a solo singer-guitarist for five years in nation wide music clubs.

GENE CLARK

HARMONICA, tambourine and vocal. Formerly a New Christy Minstrel and toured with his own trio before that.

CHRIS HILLMAN

BASS GUITAR. Has diverse musical interests and is equally comfortable playing John Coltrane solos or Bluegrass.

MIKE CLARK

DRUMS. Strictly a Byrd! Played in his school band before joining the group.

Byrds!

Packed

Abroad, 'Mr Tambourine Man' was also one of the records of the year. It went into the Australian and Canadian Top Five, and after a rush-release in Britain it climbed into the coveted English charts.

The Byrds returned to Ciro's and for the first time in years packed the place. There were queues up and down Sunset Strip of desperate teenagers clamouring to get in.

The dancefloor was a madhouse. A hardcore of Byrd followers – wayward painters, disinherited sons and heirs, bearded sculptors, misty-eyed nymphs and assorted oddballs – suddenly taught Hollywood to dance again. This was no Shake, Watusi or Frog session. It was an exercise in "Byrdmania". A frenetic extension of the talents of five quite exceptional pop musicians.

None of The Byrds is easy to get to know. In this – as in many other respects – they resemble the Beatles.

They are all intelligent, cool, acutely aware of the follies, extravagance and hypocrisy in show business. But because they had willingly abandoned their separate impoverished careers in the less remunerative branches of the industry, they plunged into the hurly-burly of the contemporary rock scene. Though they had only seven weeks' experience they were hired for all seven of the Southern Californian Rolling Stones concerts in May.

Fashionable

They were booked for a huge, prestige, charity show at LA's Shrine Auditorium, and were the hit of the night in a $100,000 rock'n'roll show at the Hollywood Bowl. Also – and America is not without its social strata – they became fashionable.

The Byrds were booked by Henry Fonda's daughter Jane for her Independence Day celebrations in Malibu. At the party were Lauren Bacall, Steve McQueen, George Cukor, Sidney Poitier, Diahann Carroll, Roddy McDowall, Mia Farrow and Warren Beatty. Adding international flavour, among the British guests were Peter Finch, James Fox, Ian Bannen, David McCallum and Jill Ireland. France was represented by Louis Jourdan, Roger Vadim and Leslie Caron.

The Byrds' diligent management – with all the enterprise and zest of an Epstein – secured them appearances on every American television show from *Hullabaloo* to *Shindig*. The only gap in The Byrds' TV scene is *The Ed Sullivan Show*. That follows this autumn. Columbia Records – grateful to The Byrds for the label's first Number One since January, 1963 – paid all expenses for an appearance at the company's convention in Miami. And the Willard Alexander Agency – bookers of Frank Sinatra, Count Basie, no less – filled every night in July with coast-to-coast dates.

London more often for work, ... a team and we'll stay that way. ...any type," he added.

"I know of no greater honour than being part of your meeting here today. I am ever mindful of all you do, and in return I can best express my feeling and gratitude in songs and pictures. All the wonderful gestures

AFTER THE BYRDS . . . IT'LL BE SONNY AND CHER!

● SONNY—shaggy fur jacket.

AFTER the Byrds, it's Sonny and Cher. This young Californian couple is hotly tipped to follow in the Byrds' footsteps when they arrive here in August.

Like the Byrds, they have aroused tremendous enthusiasm for their particular sound — half way between Dylan's slightly nasal sing-and a modified Phil Spector backing. And like the Byrds they have that look of off-beat weirdness which has nothing to do with British groups. But is more connected with Greenwich Village in New York.

With names like Sonny Bono and Cher (pronounce it "share") La Piere, you would expect something out of the ordinary.

Sonny has long hair, wears jeans with a huge buckle belt on them, plimsolls and a shaggy fur jacket. And Cher, with her shoulder-length hair and huge dark eyes, wears trouser suits and carriers droopy leather bags.

Their latest release here, and already shooting up the chart in America, is "I Got You Babe."

Now married, Sonny and Cher met up at a recording session a year ago. The session was taken by Phil Spector and the couple were hired to sing the background voices for the Ronettes.

Sonny, a busy record producer as well as songwriter and singer, produces all the records he makes with Cher, and wrote "I Got You Babe."

The incredible success of Sonny and Cher in America has happened only from the beginning of this year. In just a few months they have made appearances with the Righteous Brothers at San Francisco's Cow Palace, and with Billy J. Kramer and Gerry and the Pacemakers at Long Beach Civic Auditorium.

Marianne and Donovan are only two of the British stars who have seen them in America and who have raved over them. Watch out for Sonny and Cher!

● THEY APPEAR ON "READY, STEADY, GO" WITH THE BYRDS ON AUGUST 6.

● CHER—trouser suits.

THANK GOODNESS WE WON'T GET THIS SIX-MINUTE BOB DYLAN SINGLE IN BRITAIN

Bob Dawbarn listens to the new, six-minute long Bob Dylan single, and comes to the conclusion that it's just as well it's not scheduled for British release

MM, 7 August 1965, page 7

Even Dylan himself had trouble staying awake for the whole six minutes

Bob Dylan's latest American chart entry is the world's longest single – a six-minute epic entitled 'Like A Rolling Stone'. In Britain, CBS have no plans to release any Dylan single in the immediate future. And when a single is released, it is by no means certain to be 'Like A Rolling Stone'.

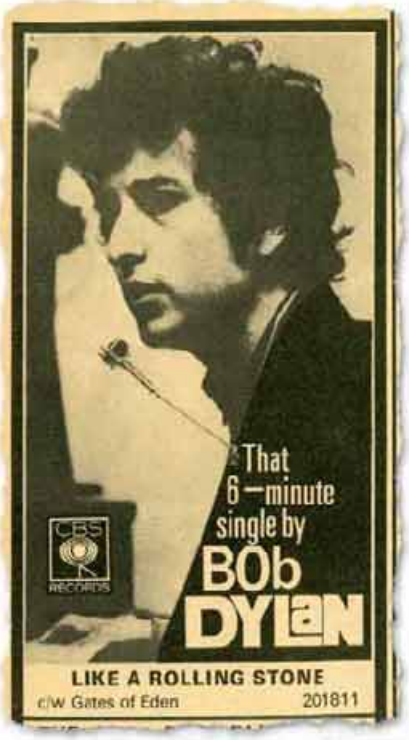
For once I'm on the side of a record company. Frankly I can't see 'Like A Rolling Stone' pleasing either faction of Dylan's British fans – the folk collection or the pop pickers. Dylan is saddled with a quite horrific backing dominated by syrupy strings, amplified guitar and organ. Mick Jagger fans will also be distressed to learn that the song title refers to a rolling stone and not a Rolling Stone. The lyric has its moments of typical Dylan imagery, but the monotonous melody and Dylan's expressionless intoning just cannot hold the interest for what seems like the six longest minutes since the invention of time. There are times when Dylan sounds faintly like Eric Burdon and, in fact, the song would be a much more suitable vehicle for The Animals than for the composer himself.

My copy of the disc bears the legend "Prod By Tom Wilson". Somebody should have prodded Mr Wilson until he agreed to lock the backing group in the cellar until the session was over. The paucity of 'Like A Rolling Stone' is emphasised by the flipside which also runs for nearly six minutes. This is 'Gates Of Eden', familiar to those who attended Dylan's British concerts and a track from his 'Bringing It All Back Home' album.

This is just Dylan with guitar and harmonica. And without the extraneous backing noises one can concentrate on what the man is saying – and some of the writing is magnificent. What other popular writer would sing "*The lamp-post stands with folded arms*"? The problem posed by 'Like A Rolling Stone' is the problem of Dylan himself at this stage in his career. His talents have become so diffuse – folk singer, writer with a social conscience, composer of hit songs, poet, satirist, pop star. The trouble comes when he starts mixing the roles. 'Like A Rolling Stone' will offend the folk purists with its strings and electric guitars. It is unlikely to appeal to pop fans because of its length, monotony and uncommercial lyric.

The monotonous melody and expressionless intoning cannot hold the interest

Those lyrics are another problem. He seems to be getting more obscure – there is an almost surrealist feel about his recent stuff compared with the directness of 'Masters Of War' and 'Don't Think Twice, It's All Right'. One imagines that this is all quite deliberate on Dylan's part. He no doubt enjoys confounding the critics and upsetting the folk fans, who first bought his records, by going over to the electronic enemy. That is his privilege. But it is also the record buyer's privilege to reject sub-standard Dylan. And that is what 'Like A Rolling Stone" is!



SINGLES

Disc Weekly, 14 August 1965, page 11

BOB DYLAN
Like A Rolling Stone
CBS

Here it is, then! That six-minute trek through Dylan-land. And a very way-out one at that.

When he did 'Subterranean…' I thought he was having a good laugh at us all. Then came 'Maggie's Farm' which, at least, was understandable. And now comes this slightly monotonous, very long Dylan record completely away from the Dylan we love or hate – depending on taste.

Accompanied by a huge massed army of strings, guitar and organ, I really wouldn't like to say what will happen to this as far as the chart goes. Interesting though. Flip is 'Gates Of Eden'. ***Penny Valentine***

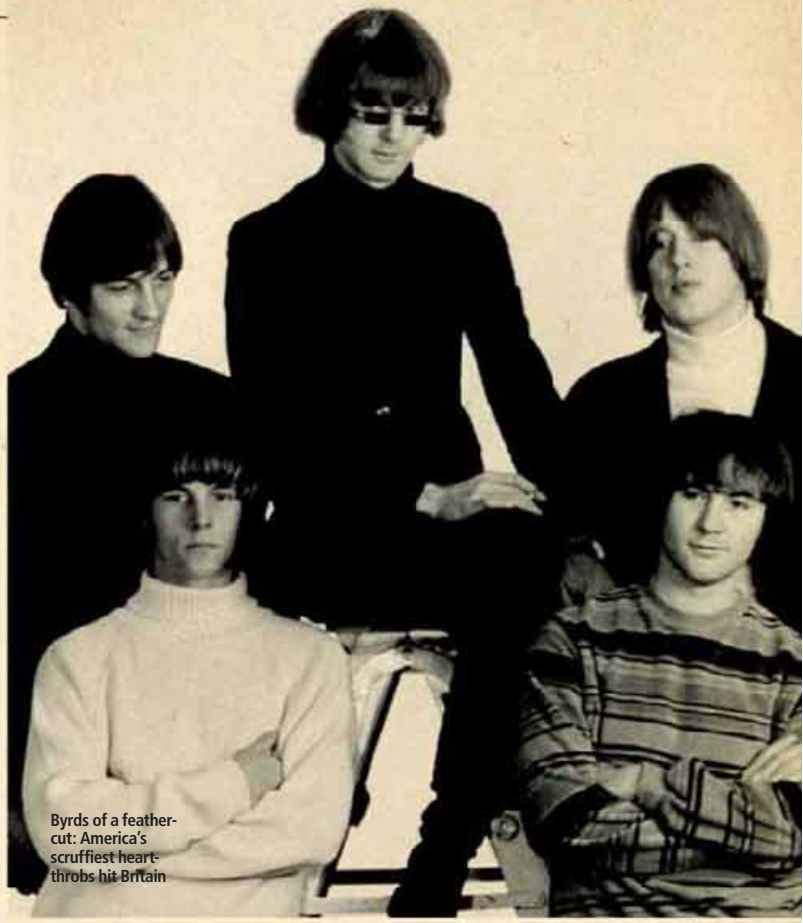
Disc Weekly, 14 August 1965, page 11

DONOVAN
Universal Soldier
Pye

This is a very beautiful EP, which is being promoted as a single. For the first time I really like Donovan. I like the change in voice, I like the way he's suddenly discovered that he can sing without resorting to Dylan phrasing. I particularly like this switch to Pete Seeger guitar work. Lovely. Of the two sides, the A-side, and presumably the one that will receive the plugs, is far and away the best.

Buffy Sainte-Marie's 'Universal Soldier' is the first track, and is followed by the loveliest song on the record, Donovan's own 'The Ballad Of A Crystal Man'. The chorus on this and Donovan's voice are perfect. Would have made a super single. The other two tracks are both anti-war songs. They are 'Do You Hear Me Now' and 'The War Drags On'. Well worth anybody's money. ***Penny Valentine***

JERRY SCHATZBERG–CORBIS/REX FEATURES/REDFERNS



Byrds of a feather-cut: America's scruffiest heart-throbs hit Britain

BYRDS
AMERICA'S BIGGEST EVER GROUP?

NME, 6 August 1965, page 10

America's hottest pop group property for years – The Byrds – flew into London early on Monday morning, and were greeted by coach-loads of fans, who had waited hours to see the group.

The five-man outfit who reached the top of the chart with a Bob Dylan composition have arrived to undertake 16 days of TV and personal appearances. Although the group has had only one hit record, The Byrds will very probably become the biggest group ever to come from America. Already in the US they are hailed as the leaders of a new cult in pop music and it shouldn't be long before the same happens in Britain. They are untidy, long-haired, intelligent and extremely modern. They are all devoted to music and regard Bob Dylan as the master of folk tune-making. Although their first disc, 'Mr Tambourine Man' and their second, 'All I Really Want To Do' were written by Dylan, the group regards itself as a rock'n'roll band – not a folk group. "We will play a lot of rock," leader Jim McGuinn told me at London's Savoy Hotel. "But Dylan is really the best folk writer of our time. His phrasing is unique. He is a product of the 20th century and completely tuned to the present time." In actual fact Bob Dylan attended the group's recording of 'Mr Tambourine Man' and was completely satisfied with the result.

Soft-spoken Jim explained the current trends in folk music. "My own opinion," he said, "is that most people in the world today are worried. The folk music of today is a reflection of present-day life. Folk music changes all the time, but the essence is the same. Life is like that, too, and music is life," he said, philosophically.

The Byrds were formed only eight months ago. Leader Jim used to play lead guitar with Bobby Darin's backing group. "Darin is a wonderful person to work with," he said. David Crosby, who arrived at the Savoy wearing a green suede cape, was a solo singer-guitarist. "But joining The Byrds was the best thing I ever did," he said. Drummer Mike Clarke used to wander around the States working whenever he could find it. He is still rather dazed by the group's success. "I never thought we'd make it," he said, simply. The group has toured the US with The Rolling Stones, and they all have a great admiration for the British music scene. Jim peered over his tiny sunglasses and explained: "The British groups are new and fresh. They have presented music in an original manner. The music itself is not new. It's a mixture of all types.

I asked Jim about a slide-rule he had in his jacket pocket. "Oh, that," he said. "I always carry it, just in case…"

"Folk music changes all the time. Life is like that too, and music is life" Jim McGuinn

The Byrds look very, very English and I asked Crosby if this was a deliberate attempt to cash in on the success of British groups in America. "Not in the least," he said. "But we do like the English mod clothes."

And what of the American groups? "There are lots of groups," said Dave. "But very few have anything to offer. In the States, Britain is still regarded as the Mecca of pop. We're very excited about touring Britain because everyone over here, even the older people, seem to have an interest in the charts."

Why do they spell their name with a 'Y'? Jim explained: "We didn't want to be confused with the English slang for girls, and so we changed the 'I'."

When the group returns to the States they hope to write, direct and star in a film. "That should be a real gas," said Jim. ***Norrie Drummond***

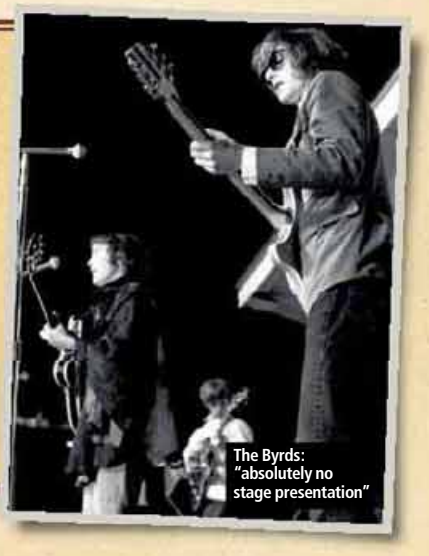
FANS GO COOL OVER TOO-COOL BYRDS

MM, 14 August 1965, page 9

"Flopsville" was London's verdict on the much-publicised Byrds. They left a trail of hot, tired, bored and disappointed fans, who waited hours to see them give a performance described as "very, very dull."

The Byrds were due at The Flamingo Club Allniter on Friday and enough people packed in for it to take on the appearance of the Black Hole Of Calcutta. The heat was intense enough to bake bread or fry eggs on the floor. A roar of applause greeted The Byrds when they finally fought their way to the stand at around 2am. Paul McCartney was among the Byrd diggers, which helped to raise the temperature of several young ladies present even more. Eventually The Byrds began their act, lasting only half an hour, during which they performed six numbers in the familiar Dylan-cum-'Tambourine Man'-cum-Searchers mould. They also played an extraordinary version of Vera Lynn's 'We'll Meet Again'. They made no attempt to communicate with the audience. It was all a bloody scene. Said Denise Hall (19): "I think they are a drag. Absolutely no stage presentation and all their numbers sound like 'Mr Tambourine Man'. They are not bad, just very, very dull."

It seems a shame to be so hard on our American guests after the receptions British groups have got in the US, but it proves they can't beat The Beatles yet. At the end of their Pontiac stint, one girl asked: "Aren't you going to say anything?" "Goodbye," said David Crosby. ***Chris Welch***



The Byrds: "absolutely no stage presentation"

SONNY & CHER
TAKE OVER THREE CHART SPOTS!

NME, 27 August 1965, page 3

"We'll never make number one in this country," said Sonny, resignedly, nonchalantly removing a wad of English pound notes from his right sock as he changed in the dressing-rooms of the *Ready Steady Go!* studios. "We've got too many discs on the go, and The Rolling Stones for company," he said, extracting a bundle of dollar bills from the other sock. "But we sure had one helluva good time here," he added. That was the scene before Sonny & Cher, the nicest twosome I've ever met, left for their Hollywood home. The pessimism proved unfounded, for they hit the top of the *NME* Chart this week with 'I Got You Babe'. As if that wasn't enough, Cher's 'All I Really Want To Do' is at Number 11 and Sonny's solo disc, 'Laugh At Me', is making a move towards a big hit at Number 21.

"Sonny wrote 'I Got You Babe' after we were thrown out of a restaurant in Los Angeles because of our clothes" Cher

With their sounds of today and clothes of tomorrow, Sonny & Cher have proved to be the "something new" we've all been waiting for from America. I spent four days following them around London, to find out just what kind of people they really are. The answer in one single word is – nice! I met Sonny in a well-known "kinky boot" shop at the back of Covent Garden. "Nice to see ya," he said. "What are you doing wandering around out there in the fog?" Off-beat humour is another Sonny speciality – although it was about 90 in the shade, I became "the man who came out of the fog" to Sonny, in contrast to Cher's image of me: "the reporter who smiles and doesn't miss a thing".

The following day I was in their dressing room at *Top Of The Pops* when Kinks co-manager Larry Page, Sonny & Cher's representative in Europe, entered wearing a pained expression. "Your Rolls-Royces have arrived," he announced to Sonny. Outside, Sonny began padding happily up and down a line of six Rolls he had ordered for viewing from the showrooms! The sight of Sonny in his shredded trousers, prodding the tyre of one limousine with his eskimo boot almost brought one chauffeur to tears. But all was forgiven when Sonny ordered two.

Back in the dressing room, I talked to Cher about her husband, his music, and his way of life. "Music is the most important thing to him – next to me," Cher told me. "He's so good because he never writes anything unless he feels it. The first record we made, 'Baby Don't Go', he wrote just after we were married. We were broke. 'I Got You Babe' he wrote after we were thrown out of a restaurant in Los Angeles because of our clothes. He knows what being hurt means."

At London airport there were tears from Cher as she distributed gold watches to people who had worked to help them. As she did this, Sonny looked even sadder than usual. ***Alan Smith***

RETNA, LFI

Sonny & Cher: Sounds of today, clothes of tomorrow, hair of 1485

BYRDS' WEAK STAGE ACT

NME, 20 August 1965, page 10

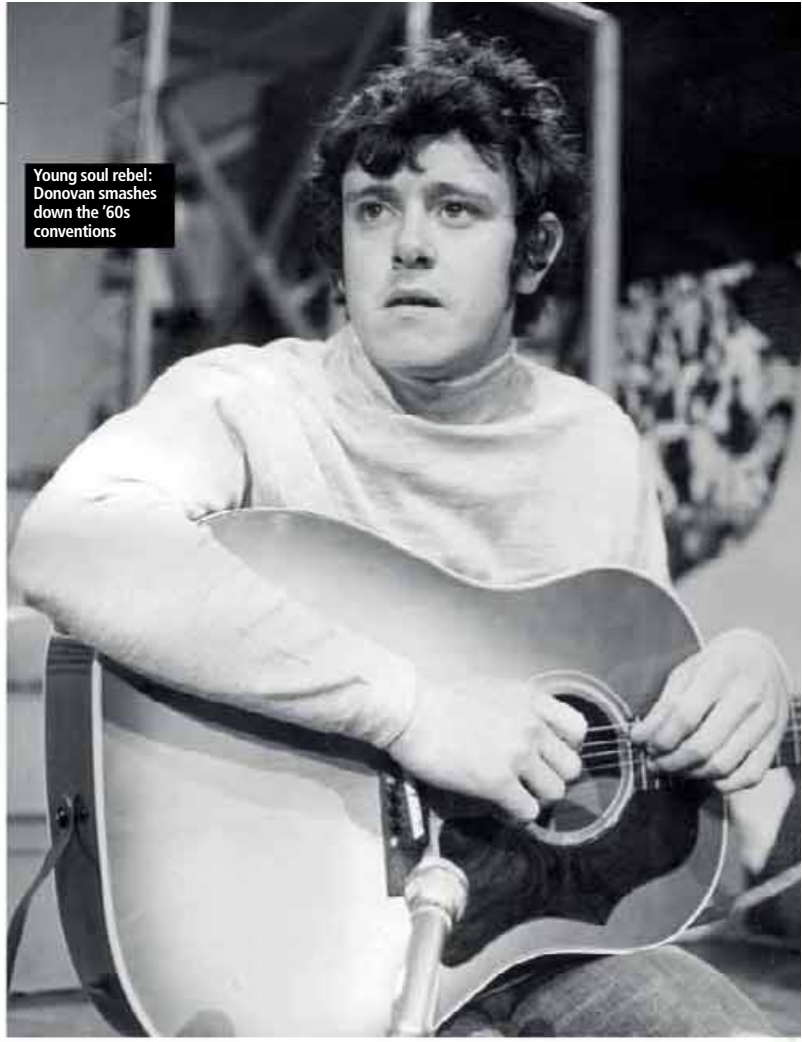
Along with Sonny & Cher I went to see The Byrds onstage at Finsbury Park Astoria last Saturday. Following their Number One hit, 'Mr Tambourine Man', the group arrived in this country with a publicity theme along the lines of "America's answer to The Beatles". On Saturday's performance, it was a pretty pathetic reply! After tuning up for a full five minutes behind the curtain, they were treated to a traditional slow handclap by the impatient audience. Then their first two numbers were completely drowned by over-amplification. I have it on good authority from Cher that the first number was 'I'll Feel A Whole Lot Better', but the vocals of that and the next number were inaudible.

At the interval compere Rod Cameron announced Sonny & Cher were in the audience and so ruined any chance they had of seeing the rest of the show! We fled backstage, where a mountainous Irish sergeant did stout work by keeping out the people he was supposed to allow inside. After letting Cher through he barred the way for Sonny, Cher's sister, their managers and myself!

The Byrds' biggest fault is this 'cool, couldn't care less' attitude. The audience don't like it. Neither do I

Rescued by two friendly policemen, we got backstage and I tried to communicate with The Byrds. I spoke to Dave Crosby, who looks like Batman Jr with dimples. "I thought we were good tonight", he said. "We don't talk much to the audience because we like our music to speak for us." With that he wrapped his green cape around himself and turned his back on me to talk to Donovan. Jim McGuinn is a likeable person. He wears squared glasses permanently on the bridge of his nose and peers at you over the top like an admonishing school teacher. He never raises his voice above a whisper and in his most emotional moments can be heard to say, "But I trust it will turn out all right in the end." He carries an air rifle and 35lb of ammunition around with him. "I couldn't ever kill anything," he states. "It's just for target practice." Gene Clark walks around in a Mountie's hat saying "Hi all!", Chris Hillman seldom says anything and Mike, the drummer, says "Cool it" and "When do we eat?" occasionally. The Byrds' biggest fault is this 'cool, couldn't care-less' attitude onstage and off. The audience don't like it. Neither do I.

Keith Altham



Young soul rebel: Donovan smashes down the '60s conventions

DONOVAN TALKS (guardedly) ABOUT IDOL DYLAN

NME, 10 September 1965, page 10

Donovan's eyes lit up almost enviously as he spoke to a friend across the recording studio. "Y'know when I was in Newport with Bob Dylan, a bloke went a bit mad and shouted: 'I'll kill for you, Bob. Who do you want killed?' Dylan just kinda looked at him."

"Did he say anything?" I asked. "No," said Donovan, flatly. Then he turned away from me, saying something about, "There's a lotta soul floatin' around here an' we gotta pick some of it from the air an' inject it into this session." A little later he looked over at me and asked, sombrely: "I wonder what *should* Dylan have said? What should *anyone* have said?" I said I didn't know. Further conversation was stilted by Donovan munching sandwiches and asking what had happened to Gypsy Dave. Gypsy had gone off seeking solitude during the short break. He was being recorded for the first time and he was obviously nervous. "So c'mon," said Don, "let's put him at ease. Let's show him some of that soul." He plucked some more at his guitar and then suddenly turned in my direction. "OK, whatcha wanna know?" I was just about to level a question at him when he turned away and began again on his guitar. Some people might have given up, but the point is – both Dylan and Donovan are like this. You have to take them as they come. Their "un-showbiz" attitude continually confounds their critics! Dylan has crashed up to Number Three with 'Like A Rolling Stone', while Donovan's 'Universal Soldier' has jumped incredibly (for an EP) to Number 15. It would be understandable if they threw themselves frenziedly into promoting their discs, but they don't.

Unconcerned

Dylan seems hardly concerned by the ups and downs of the charts – and Don makes only the occasional live appearance. Usually, his date sheet reads like a factory summer holiday rota. It was tough going getting something to report to you, but eventually I managed to cull these assorted comments from Don on his idol, Dylan!

"Dylan is a beautiful cat. He's got some nice things goin' for him. I saw him at Newport, in the States, and he was doing this great act with electric guitars. It lasted a while and was fantastic, man. Electric guitars and folk? Do they mix? Sure, if you want them to. Why not. Dylan uses electric guitars because he likes it that way. He doesn't care what people think.

"Dylan does what he wants, man. Not what convention says he's gotta do. I feel the same. All young rebels are like this. People say I'm a folk singer, but I sing anything I want… Beatles songs, everything. You have to smash down convention. Joan Baez sings Beatles songs, too. They're beautiful." He looked pained and earnest. "Listen, you don't see the real Dylan in interviews. You don't see the real Joan Baez in interviews. Same with me. There's a lotta things been said that shouldn't have been said. Things about me. Wrong things."

"You don't see the real Dylan in interviews. You don't see the real Joan Baez. Same with me. There's things said that shouldn't have been"

I asked Don if he didn't sometimes feel it might be his own fault. If he didn't like talking to reporters, how did he expect them to always be right? Answer: "I can't say what I feel in talkin', man, I say what I feel through my songs." Did he have any other news on Dylan? "Only about 'Like A Rolling Stone'," said Don, as he twanged his guitar with some of that soul. "An' all I wanna say is it's a fantastic, beautiful record. I heard it first in the States.

Characters

"There's a lot I'd like to tell you 'bout Dylan, but perhaps 'cos I'm a character myself, I don't notice so much." He turned away again and then I shook hands to leave. As I went through the door, Gypsy Dave came back in and they put all the lights out to give the session some atmosphere. I only hope they managed to find the soul they were looking for… in the dark. ***Bill Brown***

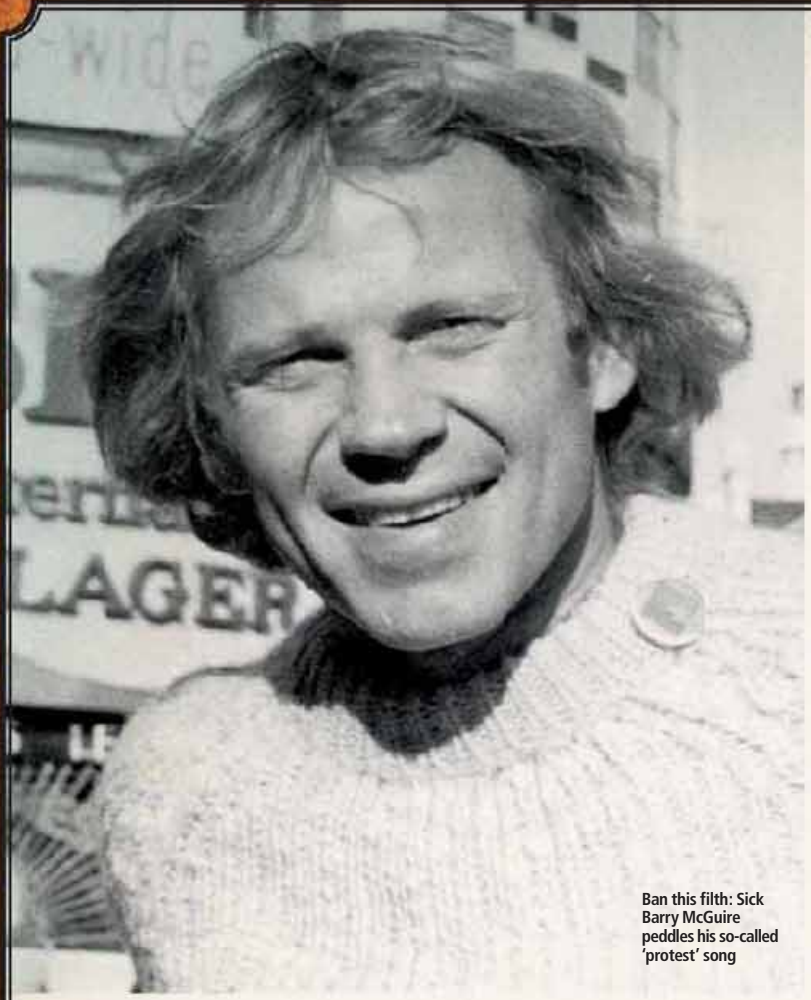
CORBIS

BOB DYLAN
Highway 61 Revisited
CBS

MM, 16 October 1965, page 12

Bob Dylan's sixth LP, like all others, is fairly incomprehensible but nevertheless is an absolute knockout. On all nine tracks Dylan uses some form of accompaniment, ranging from guitar, organ, to a siren, and the accent is mainly on swing. 'Like A Rolling Stone', familiar to most people, is followed by one of the best tracks, 'Tombstone Blues', a jumping swinger with some of the best blues guitar you've heard for years.

The title track is a fast one again that thunders along. Dylan's vocal is punctuated with sirens and bottleneck as he sings. "*Abe said*: '*Where do you want this killing done*?' *and God said*: '*Right on Highway 61*'." The tempo is slowed down for the final track, the meaningful 11 minute, 'Desolation Row'. As usual a great LP and it caters for fans who like their Dylan quiet and for those who like him swinging.



Ban this filth: Sick Barry McGuire peddles his so-called 'protest' song

Hedgehoppers in uniform

MOST groups who have their first record at number 19 in the Pop 50, and rising very fast, don't usually reckon to have many problems.

But Hedgehoppers Anonymous sure do have a problem. Three of them are still in the RAF.

Which means that they can't, for a start, accept any bookings a long way from their base, in Wittering, Sussex.

Their lead guitarist, John Stewart, 21, told the MM this week: "We're hoping that the RAF will let Les Dash, the drummer, Ray Honeyball, the bass guitarist, and myself out. If not, I think the only way is to be bought out — and then there's a hell of a lot of red tape to get through."

The Hedgehoppers, as they were formerly known, are not yet fully professional, but have been playing together for a year. They were discovered by Jonathan King this summer.

Jonathan said: "I was up in Cambridge, and was walking round the town. I saw that Brian Poole and the Tremeloes were on, and was walking past the ballroom when I heard these Buddy Holly numbers coming out.

"Now I'm a great fan of Buddy Holly, so I went in expecting to see Brian Poole on the stand. It was a group called the Hedgehoppers, and I thought they were very good.

"I had an idea for a number, and gradually 'It's Good News Week', materialised. I took it to the Hedgehoppers, who worked out a straight arrangement. Decca accepted it, and it was rush released."

Was "Good News Week", in the Hedgehoppers groove?

"Yes, it was quite right for us," said John, "we've always done light harmony stuff. Things like Beach Boys, and Hollies style. We're not a blatant copy — it's just the four-part harmony. We've also been influenced by the Beatles, but then who hasn't?

"We dig a lot of American stuff, like 'Detroit City', and 'It's Alright'. Trouble with the lyrics of 'It's Good News Week'? Well yes, we're supposed to be changing the bit about birth control, for the States . . .

"That's not definite," said Jonathan, "one of the big radio stations has got the original record, which they will be plugging. If there are great complaints then we'll be sending out a 'revised' version."

Has Jonathan written a follow up to "Good News Week"? "I've not written anything yet — I can't write under pressure!" he said.—N.J.

McGuire with a message...

MM, 9 October 1965, page 3

In his hilltop home just off Laurel Canyon in Hollywood, Barry 'Eve Of Destruction' McGuire told me of his "Love everyone philosophy" which he hopes to bring to England with his songs.

"The message songs of today follow the times and happenings," he told me. "Romance is changing; the rules are different from 20 years ago. People talk of a more sincere, broader love. It takes away the bad things in love – the jealousies, the fears. It's having a love affair with humanity."

Barry went on: "The folk-rock controversial songs are just the beginning. Soon there'll be sounds that people have never dreamed of – the integration of eastern and western music. The eastern scales and quarter tones will integrate well with rock'n'roll music. The Byrds, The Beatles and others are already doing it. I want to get into it."

Barry said that beat musicians and their fans are freeing themselves of the restrictive shackles in life and "just loving and having fun". He particularly admires the fun-feeling and honesty of The Beatles.

"When I was in London with the Christy Minstrels, we met The Beatles. But it was just a very fast hello. My greatest desire is to know them," he said. "I have the greatest respect for those kids. I must spend a couple of hours in England to talk with them. They're doing everything. They change all the time. The Beatles are very wild. They're smart, creative kids."

> "The message songs of today follow the times. Romance is changing. People talk of a more sincere, broader love"

Barry said that the customers that are coming in to see him currently at The Trip on the Sunset Strip are "beautiful people". He said that he wants to tell the kids in England about the kids in the United States. He expounds the philosophy that people individually should understand how beautiful they are. "Accept and admit your own beauty and that you are great."

Barry has always admired the music of modern jazz musicians. He mentioned Stan Kenton, Shorty Rogers, Miles Davis, Dave Brubeck, but he said that the jazz musicians sought and found sounds but they never found themselves. At the age of 25, he joined in a sing-song at a Laguna Beach coffee house, was heard by the club owner, and booked for the club as a solo. Following local club gigs, he joined with another singer, named Barry Kane, and they worked for a while as Barry And Barry. Randy Sparks hired them when he was forming the Christy Minstrels. The Christy group sang everywhere – for President Johnson, at the Hollywood Bowl, Carnegie Hall, at the San Remo Festival and in London. When Randy Sparks left, Barry fronted the group.

Mr 'Eve Of Destruction' is not accustomed to screams from the audience. "I had the screamers only once – at the Aragon Ballroom in Santa Monica. I really dug it. I've only been in showbiz for four years and being onstage is always so groovy. When I saw The Beatles at the Hollywood Bowl and the audience reaction, I was shaking with excitement. I can imagine The Beatles up there must go out of their minds."

Barry was born in Oklahoma, but his family moved to California when he was one. At 16, he joined the navy. At 16 and 11 months he was discharged as being too young. So he followed his father's profession and became a construction worker. "I used to sing on the scaffolding," he recalled. Currently, blond brawny Barrie lives with his Viennese-born wife, Elaine, and three year old son Stephen in a quiet street just a stone's throw from The Byrds. "As soon as I get enough loot, I'm going to have a new house built in the hills here," he told me. "My friends are here, my safe world is here. But in the meantime I'm looking forward to Europe." London will love this Barry McGuire. ***Howard Lucraft***

PROTEST SONGS
HOW SICK WILL THEY GET?

NME, 24 September, page 9

Sing a song of protest – and you, too, could find yourself there in the charts. Suddenly a whole flood of these let's-put-the-world-right numbers has descended on the ears of the record-buying public. Some of them don't even want to put the world right – they just tell us things are in a heck of a mess, and that's that.

Barry McGuire's 'Eve Of Destruction' is about the biggest of these spine-chilling ditties at the moment. But if you thought that was controversial, then stand by for a really mighty blast of opinion when a new LP is released today. The album has been recorded by the Hollies, who usually specialise in a happy sound. But not this time – for one track ends with the massive, rumbling roar of an A-bomb explosion. You could call it the fade-out ending to end them all. Personally, I think it qualifies as the sickest disc idea in a long time.

Hollie Tony Hicks doesn't feel the same. He told me: "We've called the song 'Too Many People', and it says that God has ways of cutting down the population when there are too many people in the world. War does away with a lot, and then there were things like the plague of London. It kind of levels things up." Their recording manager suggested rounding it all off with a nuclear blast. Said Tony: "It will be controversial, but that never did any harm. It's publicity, and with a record, you're just selling a product."

Actually, many record-buyers may not realise how many of the current crop of discs come under the "protest" banner. Billy Joe Royal's 'Down In The Boondocks' talks of love and poverty and The Animals' 'We Gotta Get Out Of This Place' was a slashing condemnation of the way so many people live and die in slums. Dylan is the granddaddy of the protesters. His 'Blowin' In The Wind' hit out at race prejudice and 'Like A Rolling Stone' also has its share of social comment. Do the fans realise all this? Or do they regard such songs as – as Paul of Peter, Paul & Mary put it – "just nice, pretty toons"? Said Paul: "We call the people who don't understand 'Fred and Ethel'. I guess you have a lot of Freds and Ethels here too. I think protest songs are one of the greatest things to hit popular music in a long time." He added that he and Peter and Mary were great Donovan fans – they loved the sentiments of 'Universal Soldier'. Don himself had some comments on the protest movement in pop. And as the "king" of British protest, his comments are certainly worth hearing. "All protest songs are good," he told me, "in that they make people aware of the situation. I hope 'Universal Soldier' does this. No, I haven't heard any criticism of it – except from America. I suppose they think it'll affect enlistment. 'Eve Of Destruction'? Well, there are good ones and there are bad ones. That's a bad one."

For every new song telling us about war and death, there are still dozens of singers who have decided to leave the protest movement well and truly alone. Ken Dodd is one: "They're not exactly my kind of music," he told me. Dusty Springfield is another. "I'm rather tired of this angry young man thing," she says. "There's a lot of twanging, wailing stuff around, but Donovan I like. I think he really believes in what he's doing." This is the point – he believes in what he's doing. But one of the latest so-called protest songs is from Hedgehoppers Anonymous, a British group with several members who are in the Air Force. Their number called 'It's Good News Week' throws in every ingredient from birth control to the A-bomb and *"rotting bodies"*. I call this sick. I'll go along with protest songs to a degree, because it would be silly to close our eyes to many things that need changing in the world. But I am sure many *NME* readers will agree that the pop world isn't the right place for lyrics about *"rotting bodies"* – or the big beat sound of nuclear explosions. ***Alan Smith***

Melody Maker

STONES IN IRELAND

POP PROTEST SONGS SOAR

HERMAN HITS OUT!

The pop world isn't the right place for lyrics about "rotting bodies", or the big beat sound of nuclear explosions

THE DYLAN I KNOW

Eric Burdon, lead singer with The Animals, describes his first meeting with the controversial folk king

Disc Weekly, 6 November 1965, page 10

Bob Dylan hates living in New York but when he does it's in a penthouse in the house of his manager, Al Grossman. It's a comfortably-sized place with three bedrooms, bathroom, dining room and a quite large lounge. All the fittings are modern but the furniture is just very hip. It's not modern or antique. But it suits the place – and Dylan.

He's got a big colour projector there and he and his manager take a lot of care choosing the right type of picture of him to be released.

Not necessarily the ones that make him look the best – but the type of picture. Most of them are very way-out. He's very artistic in his ways but yet when you are carrying on a normal conversation with him he's a surprisingly straight guy. Not as deep as you'd expect.

Appreciated

But in the right company, and talking on a subject he likes, Dylan will go on forever.

I first met Bob just before he became popular. It was during our first trip to the States. The rest of the boys had been out with him for the evening but I'd been out with a bird. We met up late in the Brass Kettle, a bar in Greenwich Village, New York.

No sooner had he said, "Hi, man," than he tried to chat up my girl. I didn't mind because I was chuffed that he appreciated my choice.

The day the boys went up to his flat was the same day he had recorded 'Subterranean Homesick Blues'. He couldn't make up his mind whether to release it as a single. They assured him it was right.

I don't think he's worried about his image as a pop star – his songs are most important to him. He spends money quite liberally but hasn't got a lot of worldly possessions. I'm told he gives a lot of money away to worthy causes but he never talks about this.

He spends quite a lot of time in Ondines, a discotheque, when he's in New York. And he still gets down to Greenwich Village quite a lot to the blues and folk clubs there.

He never seems to stay in one place very long but prefers the country to town life. When he's in town and not working Dylan wears mostly lightweight jackets or corduroy stuff and gay shirts, slightly different to what he wears onstage. But mostly he's typical with all the kids around New York.

More sincere

Although he may not sound like it, I can assure you that Dylan enjoys life in his own way. He's a lot more sincere as a person than lots of other people I know in the pop business.

He enjoys a drink, so he's in good company with us! But this time he looked very ill. I would say he should ease up.

BUT HE'S A KNOCKOUT GUY!

SINGLE

MM, 18 December 1965, page 21

SIMON & GARFUNKEL
The Sound Of Silence CBS

Folk singers Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel presenting their big American hit written by Simon. A moving, depthy disc, with some Byrds-type guitar accompaniment. Interesting harmonies and backing might make this a popular record in English folk circles also.

Simon & Garfunkel: the original Art folkers in 1965

Dylan hopes he's got enough booze in for The Animals' next visit

"When I first met Bob Dylan no sooner had he said, 'Hi, man,' than he tried to chat up my girl. I didn't mind because I was chuffed he appreciated my choice" Eric Burdon

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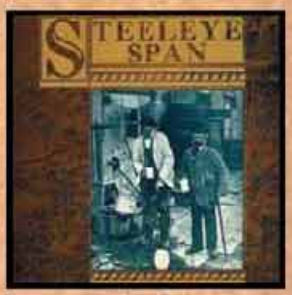

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Melody Maker

December 10, 1966

9d weekly

'SUPERMAN' CRASHES POP 50

DONOVAN'S RETURN

DONOVAN was racing up both the British Pop 50 and the American charts this week, with two different singles.

RETURN

OWNED

• DONOVAN in POP TODAY on Tune in page seven

WHO GREAT NEW LP

PAGE 13

FAME WHAT'S HIS GAME

PAGE 3

BELLSON ON ROCK DRUMS

WILD BILL BACK IN '67

Fans force Scott to quit monastery

SCOTT WALKER has been forced to leave a monastery on the Isle of Wight—because of his fame.

DISC and MUSIC ECHO 9d

USA 20c

SANDIE in battle with Cilla

MICK Fed up with Dylan

BEATLES single: YOUR VERDICT PAGE 20

DODDY why all the nasty sneers? PAGE 11

SCOTT should he make solo hits? PAGE 11

UPROAR AT

DISC and MUSIC ECHO 9d

JANUARY 21, 1967

USA 20c

MONKEES top: all set to tour Britain

• DAVY JONES

FULL STORY: PAGE 4

CAT and CLEO claw up chart!

CHARGING UP the chart this week: CAT STEVENS with his highly catchy "Matthew And Son." Here he's pictured with his pet named Cleo — and they both have plenty to purr about!

STONES — page 9

NANCY — new hit

THE WHO — page 8

4 TOPS —yeah yeah!

EVERY FRIDAY 6d

sical press

MONKEES CONCERT

at Hollywood Bowl: Wembley rehearsal? pics and full review

With HENDRIX, BURDON, WHO in New York and Monterey

TOP POP NEWS With SANDIE SHAW behind Iron Curtain

• SIMON DEE • VINCE HILL • ELVIS INSULT

LITTLE OLE WINE DRINKER ME

B/W WALKER'S WOODS

ROBERT MITCHUM

CHAPTER 2

1966-1967

DYLAN DISAPPEARS, SIMON & GARFUNKEL HIT BIG AND THE MAMAS AND THE PAPAS HAVE THE WORLD CALIFORNIA DREAMING

'SILENT' DYLAN TALKS AFTER ALL!

NME's Tracy Thomas reports from Bob's LA press conference

NME, 11 February 1966, page 12

Brigitte Bardot, Robert Goulet and Phil Spector. What have these three famous celebrities in common? All played a part in one of Bob Dylan's infrequent press conferences in Hollywood recently!

The shapely French actress' name arose in the question: "Didn't you dedicate your first song to her?" Tousled-haired, sleepy-eyed, faint-voiced Dylan agreed and proceeded to crack up the hardened reporters with his answer to the follow-up: "Why?" "Why? Come on, you can see why! Think it out for yourself!"

Though a local television commentator tried his best to make today's king of folk'n'roll say that Barry McGuire is a protest singer, Dylan did not succumb, insisting that McGuire is a mixture of country and western and modern-day minstrel.

"I think a protest singer is one who sings against his will. Like Robert Goulet or Eydie Gorme."

Spector proved to be one of his favourite A&R men, though he admitted: "I've only heard of a few."

Meanwhile another reporter attempted to force the undernourished-looking singer into confessing that he and many other performers use drugs. But to no avail.

"I wouldn't know one if I saw one. Why, do you use 'em?" he cracked with a smile.

Warmed up

Most of the press obviously expected obscure wisecracks from a sullen, sarcastic, rebellious youth. Instead, Dylan began the conference with mumbled, incoherent answers, but soon warmed to his audience, laughing and joking, but giving wild answers to poor or obvious questions, in excellent deadpan fashion.

Perhaps the best example was his comment about movie plans. Speaking out of the top of his head, an innocent-appearing Dylan elaborated: "Yes, we're making one. I'll play my mother in it. I guess we'll call it *Mother Revisited*. I'm quite excited about it." This last bit was dragged out in a lazy, completely bored tone.

And again, when quizzed on why he was in California, folk music's boy-wonder replied in a manner rivalling the famous Liverpool straight-faced send-uppers: "To find some donkeys. We're shooting this film about the life of Christ back in New York and we need several donkeys. Also, I'm doing a few concerts."

His serious and thoughtful side came to force when discussing his followers. "I was amazed when I heard a taped interview with a 15-year-old girl, who was waiting to get into one of my concerts. She said how she digs William Blake and a bunch of others that no one else has read.

"She was really hip and more free in mind than most of these 22-year-old college kids."

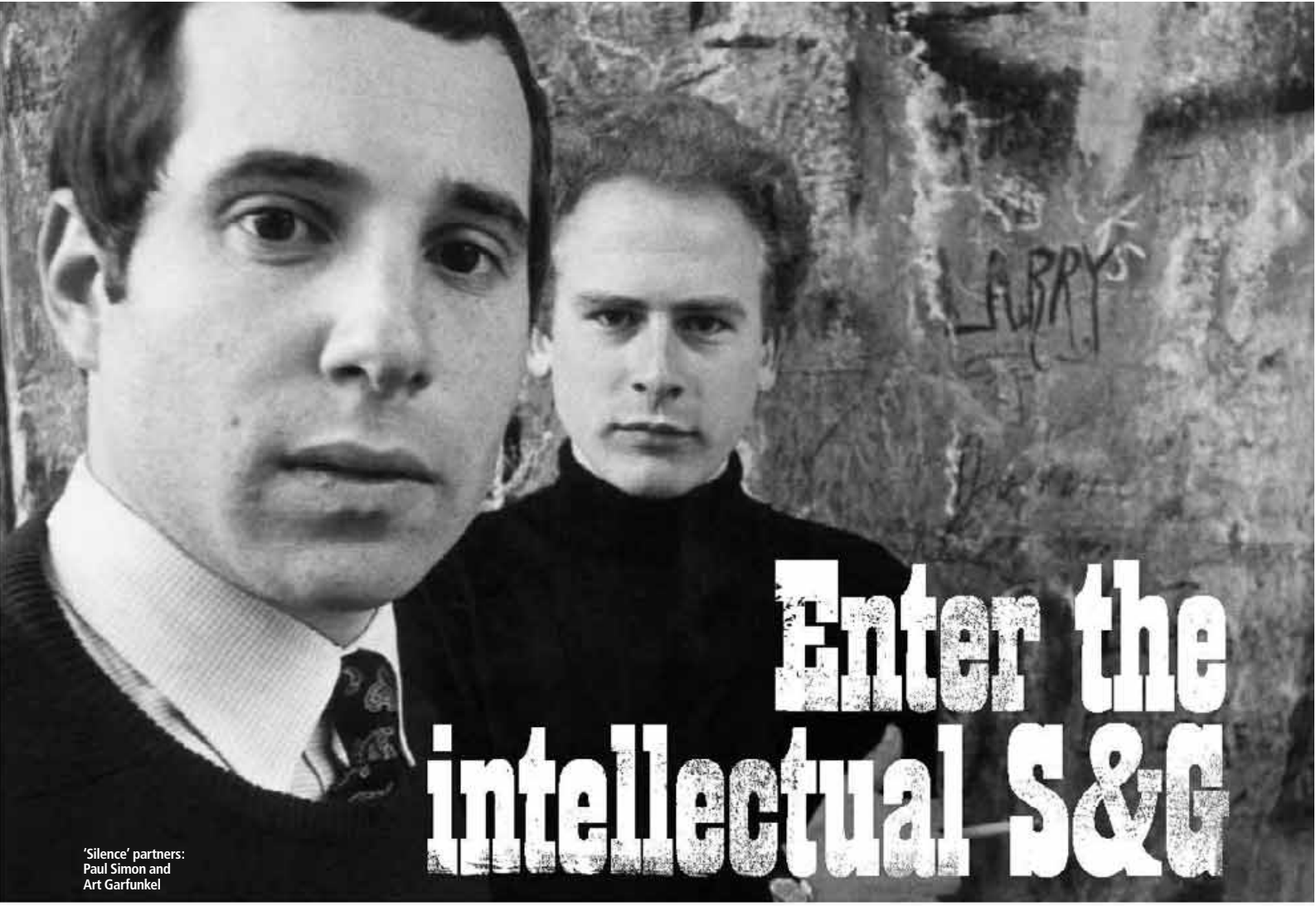
About letters from fans: "Some of them actually understand. I like to read them."

Politics and political singers crept into the questioning, but Dylan adamantly denied any connections. "I'm too busy for that. It's fine for those who want to mix the two fields, but it's not for me."

However, he couldn't let the subject pass without a laugh. When asked about his participation in anti-Vietnam movements he protested: "I don't participate in anything. I defy you to name one thing I participated in. Name one!"

The conference ended with the all-in-black-clad Dylan remaining in his seat several minutes to oblige the photographers. With a wave and a smile, one of the most influential and controversial musical figures of our time concluded a rare 45 minutes of answering a wide assortment of questions, leaving the impression that, if not the boy-genius-next-door, he is at least a lot more human than we're led to believe!

REDFERNS



Enter the intellectual S&G

'Silence' partners: Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel

NME, 8 April 1966, page 10

"Life is like a game. Everyone keeps trying to find out how to win. If you stopped trying to discover this, life would be nothing."

The average rock'n'roll star does not give out similes like this. But then Paul Simon is not average. Simon & Garfunkel are not average.

The duo hail from New York; Paul's a writer and Art is a former architectural student. Their intellectual prowess and less-than-consuming interest in music separate them from the "normal" performer, if there is such a thing!

When I spoke with them during a recent visit to LA, Simon insisted: "No matter how successful we are, I'll quit in a couple of years. I enjoy singing, but the main thing I want to do is write. That's what I'm living for.

"In between performances, I'm always writing, trying to develop characters, so that I can do the Great American Novel." His earnest speech ended with a chuckle at himself.

"Very little rock'n'roll is creative," he continued. "People like The Who, Bob Dylan, The Animals and some others are developing new sounds, but so many are just stagnating, recording old songs or writing something similar."

Actually Simon and his tall, blond partner Garfunkel have been singing folk music around New York and in Europe on and off for many years.

> "Dylan started something beautiful but it was destroyed by commercial songs without meaning" Paul Simon

Intermittent

"We'd go off to school for a while, see each other again and sing together for a while. Then we'd drift apart and then get back together again," Paul explained.

"We were in England when we heard the news about 'The Sound Of Silence' hitting big in the States. Columbia Records has taken it from our album, recorded a couple of years ago, and added the rock backing. We hurried back home as pop stars!"

Sudden fame has not drastically changed the philosophical pair, nor has the screaming adulation of fans turned their heads. They offer a discerning explanation.

"They're not yelling at me," Paul commented. "They're screaming for what they think I am – some dream of what I might be."

Art broke in: "It's really a weird situation. A few weeks ago, I could walk down the street and no one would think twice. Now I'm a big star – I get mobbed. Just a hit record and… wham!"

This was one of the usually quiet Art's few outbursts, but another came when I suggested that they could be termed urban folk singers.

"Why must everyone label things?" Eventually he admitted to the "urban" since their songs are about New York most of the time, and to "singer" and a half hour later to "folk" but only under certain definitions

Finally he professed to love rock'n'roll. "It's a lot of fun! We're trying to organise a permanent backing band. I hope we'll be able to play concerts in lots of colleges. I'm really quite excited about it!" Art, rather a studious lad, seemed surprised at his own enthusiasm.

"We certainly don't want to be called folk-rock," interjected Paul. "Bob Dylan started something beautiful, but some guys came along and destroyed it by writing commercial songs without meaning."

Tracy Thomas

SIMON & GARFUNKEL
Sounds Of Silence
CBS

MM, 23 April 1966, page 13

Are Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel on the threshold of becoming the next extension to the waning Dylan cult? This features Paul's original numbers, subtle protests against the amplified "commerciality" of Dylan. They tell of two lonely men committing suicide in 'Richard Corey' and 'A Most Peculiar Man', then switch to rock'n'roll on 'Somewhere They Can't Find Me', or 'We've Got A Groovy Thing Goin''. Interesting, entertaining.

Paul's original numbers are subtle protests against the amplified Dylan

CORBIS – BETTMANN

Paul Simon looks to score some pounds, shillings and pence

PAUL SIMON POP THINK IN

MM, 30 April 1966, page 7

British folk clubs: "My favourite! At British clubs, the audiences are very attentive and very open-minded. There is a beautiful idealism and none of that New York cynicism. Dylan once said… forget it, I don't want to talk about Dylan."

Rock'n'roll: "When it's good, it's very good, and when it's bad, it's lousy. I never could stand the Stones until I heard 'Satisfaction'. When it's bad it's Gary Lewis & The Playboys. Their music doesn't mean a damn thing. I like The Yardbirds and The Hollies."

Bob Dylan: "Unfortunately, I'm always being compared to Bob Dylan but I don't think we are talking about the same things. He is always dumping people more than I do. It's really easy to put somebody down. It's tougher to love than to hate. The biggest thing Dylan has got going for him is his mystique. We've met on a few occasions and he's difficult to communicate with. Artie likes him. More than I do."

Soldiers: "Emotionally, I'm tremendously against soldiers. Intellectually, I realise they are part of the game of international politics. I wish we didn't have to have them, particularly in Vietnam. I don't know what the solution will be. They tell the American people we are there because of a moral commitment, but we are there for a strategic reason. They shouldn't say we are there to defend the Vietnamese against communism. The people just want to live in peace. It doesn't matter to them who it is that comes along and burns their villages."

LSD: "I had a whole conversation about it with an old guy recently before I realised he was talking about pounds, shillings and pence. I thought I was in the middle of a Chekhov play. LSD has tremendous personality. There is a definition that genius is the ability to see relationships that other people don't see. Scientists have expounded a theory that a chemical reaction makes for genius. LSD is a mind stimulant and if they could control it, they could create a world full of geniuses! They could cure all mental disorders. But if it is not used properly it can cause lasting damage. I don't think there is too much wrong with pot either. It's a lot less harmful than booze."

"I don't think folk rock is commercialisation, it's just another way of saying what you want to say"

Greenwich Village: "There's a lot of mythology about Greenwich Village. There are a lot of creative people in Greenwich Village and a lot of phonies. It's the Bohemian myth. Everybody comes from a town like Duluth to make the scene, and the place is filled with people from Duluth! Most of the folk places have gone over to folk rock now. The Lovin' Spoonful, The Mamas And The Papas, Jim McGuinn and Dylan and us all came out of folk into folk rock. I don't think it's commercialisation. It's just another way of saying what you want to say."

Long hair: "Who cares how you wear your hair? Short, long – whichever way you like. I think it's stupid to grow your hair long because it's cool, but if you dig it – great."

Cassius Clay: "A fine showman. Can't say I go along with his affiliations with the black Muslims. I don't buy racial supremacy. Black supremacy or white supremacy. But I can understand negroes being so frustrated with their position as to join a group that would be violently anti-white. They had a very eloquent representative in Malcolm X and it was a pity he got killed."

Byrds disc banned on drugs rap

Disc and Music Echo, 14 May 1966, page 9

The Byrds' latest US hit single 'Eight Miles High' – now on release in England on the CBS label – has been banned in Washington, the US capital, and in the cities of Baltimore and Houston.

The record was already in the United States Top Ten when it was labelled a "drug song" by the Gavin Report, a subscription sheet circulated weekly – and widely – to radio stations and other entities in the recording industry.

Compiled by record expert Bill Gavin in San Francisco, the report substantially influences a thousand or more radio stations which, in the US, make or break discs.

Of The Byrds' song – and of Bob Dylan's 'Rainy Day Women' – Gavin says: "We have dropped 'Rainy Day Women' and 'Eight Miles High' from our recommended playlist. In our opinion, these records imply encouragement and/or approval of the use of marijuana or LSD."

All those acid… sorry, *plane* trips really turned the Byrds on to fashion

The irony of it is that The Byrds and Dylan are, in their lyrical innocence, again linked in a drugs controversy. The first time this happened was in the middle of last year when pundits hazarded guesses that 'Mr Tambourine Man' referred to a drug pedlar.

'Eight Miles High' was written largely by Byrd-member Gene Clark with help from fellow Byrd-members Jim McGuinn and Dave Crosby, and it refers specifically to London and the strange effect of the city on The Byrds when they arrived last autumn by jet from the US, having passed through various time zones. The phrase "eight miles high" refers to the height of the aircraft in flight. Commented Jim McGuinn: "We could have called the song 'Forty-Two Thousand Two Hundred And Forty Feet', but somehow this didn't seem to be a very commercial song title and it certainly wouldn't have scanned.

"It seems extraordinary that a very pretty lyric about an intriguing city should be condemned because the phrases are couched in some sort of poetry."

REDFERNS, CORBIS

WILL THE REAL BOB DYLAN PLEASE STAND UP?

Max Jones meets the mystical mister Dylan

MM, 14 May 1966, page 3

Chatting up Bob Dylan is not the simplest job in the world. It used to be easier, but as he gets older he seems to grow more and more fed up with questions.

One of the difficulties is getting him alone. When you've failed in that, the next hindrance is his reluctance to impart information. It's not that he won't answer. But his replies, sometimes oblique and often designed to send-up, carry vagueness to the borders of evasion.

This is understandable with the personal stuff: Will you be meeting The Beatles? ("I don't know") or do you have a marriage certificate? ("Why are you so interested in what I've got?")

But it's harder to see the reason for equivocation on the subject of what instruments he'll be playing on the tour.

Having read that he was booed at a US concert last year when he emerged with an electric guitar for the second half, and greeted by mass shouts of "We want the real Dylan!" I wanted to know if he'd be using an amplified guitar over here. "I'm not sure if I will or not," was the best I could get.

At times the answers were amusing, more often confusing. Asked if the label 'folk-rock', sometimes applied to his current music-making, meant anything to him, he queried back at me: "Folk rot?"

When we'd established the term, he shook his head. "No, well, they say a lot of things about me. I'm a folk singer. A purist folk singer, no more and no less."

As I had just been reading an American interview which said Dylan disowns all the folk songs he wrote and protest songs that made him famous, this last was on the confusing side. I pressed on.

"I read that you no longer sing protest songs. Why is that?"

"Who said that?" he mumbled, then warming to the theme (for him): "All my songs are protest songs. All I do is protest. You name it, I'll protest about it."

Will he do TV shows for the BBC again this year?

"Yes, I'll do anything. But I don't know if I'll do them or not. I just get the word from other people to turn up somewhere and I'm there."

To raise the level of the conversation, I injected the names of Bukka White, Son House and Big Joe Williams. Did Dylan still listen to such blues singers?

"I know Big Joe, of course. But I never listened to these men on records too much. Lately I've been listening to Bartók and Vivaldi and that sort of thing. So I wouldn't know what's happening."

There was absolute mystery about the number and identity of Bob Dylan's accompanists. So I asked him how many there were in his group.

"Oh, 14, 15," he said indefinitely.

"All my songs are protest songs. All I do is protest. You name it, I'll protest about it"

"What about Mike Bloomfield? He played guitar on your last album."

"Michael Bloomfield… No, I used him in the studio but he's not here. Who is? Oh, George, Harry, Fred, Jason."

Before we parted, another journalist was questioned by Dylan. He mentioned his paper. Dylan looked blank. "It's the leading musical paper in the country," said the reporter, firmly.

"The only paper I know is the *Melody Maker*," was Dylan's reply. One way and another, he makes it clear he's not out to win friends and influence newspapermen.

See page 47 to read how NME *covered this same press conference rather differently*

Dylan folk-rocks out with Rick Danko (left) and Robbie Robertson (right)

REDFERNS, RETNA

DUBLIN
NIGHT OF THE BIG LETDOWN

MM, 14 May 1966, page 3

After an hour of the opening Dublin concert on Thursday, Bob Dylan, the folk-poet genius credited with re-routing the entire cause of contemporary folk music, suffered the humiliation of a slow hand-clap. It was the climax of mutual growing contempt – Dylan for the audience and the audience for Dylan's new big sound. Dylan split his 93-minute concert in two, the first half being a solo performance. It has been said recently that he has gone away from the bigger things in life. Certainly his own performance was completely introvert and personal, touching on sex – 'Give Something Back' – broken love affairs – 'Visions Of Johanna' – and leading into life in a bitter social parody 'Desolation Row'.

For the second half, he brought on the backing of piano, organ, drums and two guitars. Like Newport last year where he was booed offstage, it proved a disaster. It was unbelievable to see a hip, swinging Dylan trying to look and sound like Mick Jagger and to realise after the first few minutes that it wasn't a take-off. Someone shouted "traitor". Someone else "leave it to The Rolling Stones". Dozens walked out.

With the exception of the powerful 'Like A Rolling Stone' and 'One Too Many Mornings', what came out of the amplifiers was nothing more than watered down rhythm and blues.

It was sad to see the tiny figure with the desolate barbed-wire hair trying to make it a night to remember for the two thousand who came to hear him.

For most, it was the night of the big let-down.

Vincent Doyle

Mamas and Papas: all shapes and sizes!

NME, 20 May 1966, page 10

Like flying to the moon… like attending the *NME* Poll Winners' Concert… like meeting John Lennon at Disneyland… The Mamas And The Papas almost defy description! And they come in all shapes and sizes too! Michelle Gilliam is married, blonde and slim. Cass Elliot is single and far from slim! John Phillips is tall, thin and married to Michelle. Denny Doherty is handsome, comes from Canada and laughs at his own sarcasm.

Talking to them is an unforgettable – and sometimes confusing – experience; like when Cass explained the group to me as: "Every one of us is really into whatever it is we are and there's no question of waiting for everyone to define our personalities. You can see what we are by looking at us." She then added: "It's so apparent!" Shades of Dylan! And the confusion was helped when I met all four of them later at their record company offices in Beverly Hills.

Few words

I had asked them how they got their name. Denny, who says so much in so few words, replied: "That's a no-no. We never answer that type of question."

All four, I soon discovered, are masters of the send-up. Warming to their victim John said: "We named ourselves after our parents." Denny came in with: "Or maybe after the fourth commandment 'Thou shalt honour thy father and mother'." Then it was Cass' turn and she – I think – took pity on me: "Maybe it was when we were in the Virgin Isles camping out, Michelle and I were the Ladies, John and Dennis were the Gentlemen. You know, 'The Ladies will cook the food and the Gentlemen will take out the garbage.'

"Seriously, when we were in Los Angeles we saw a TV programme about the Hells Angels. One of the Angels was talking about their girls and he said, 'Some people call 'em cheap but we call 'em our mamas'. John and Denny started calling us 'mamas' as a joke! When we signed with Dunhill the man who became our manager said 'What's the name of your group?' We had been joking calling each other 'mamas' and 'papas' and he said, 'I love it!' We almost called ourselves The Magic Circle, but The Mamas And The Papas represents us much more."

Cass was formerly in The Mugwumps, a folk group composed of John Sebastian and Zal Yanovsky (of The Lovin' Spoonful) and John and Denny. When they broke up, John and Denny teamed as The Journeymen.

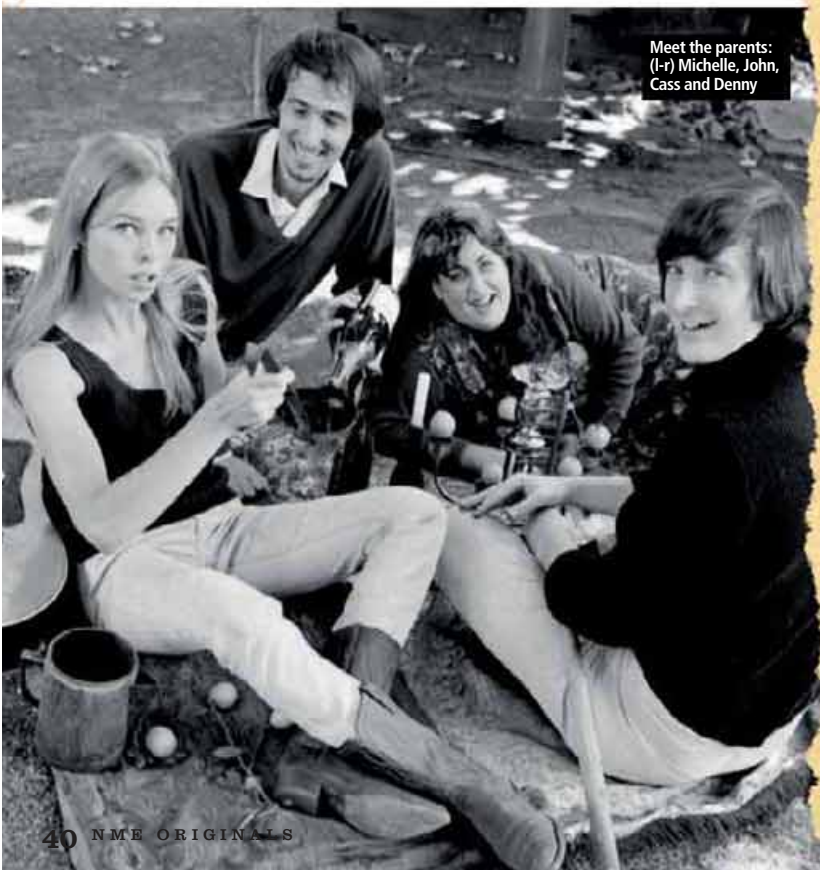
How did John convince Michelle to give up modelling? "Mostly by body punches" he informed me

Convinced

While driving down the Pennsylvania turnpike, John convinced his wife Michelle that she should sing too. How did he convince her to give up modelling? "Mostly by body punches," he informed me.

Cass followed the three of them to the Virgin Islands, but not as part of the group since her range was not high enough.

That problem was remedied soon enough. "I got hit on the head with a pipe, which increased my range by three notes," she explained. "I'm still not sure, but I think they arranged to have that pipe fall on me!" ***Ann Moses***



Meet the parents: (l-r) Michelle, John, Cass and Denny

STRAIGHT FROM THE VIRGIN ISLES

MM, 21 May 1966, page 7

Mama's, Papa's hunger no more

THE Mama's And Papa's (note the carefully - placed apostrophes) are not really mamas and papas at all. Where they got their name is not important. What is important is that these four strange and lovely, but hardly weird, people have become as important to the young American as Cleanosil face application.

"California Dreamin'" has been an enormous hit in America and "Monday Monday" still surveys its competitors from its lofty throne at the summit of Billboard's Hot 100.

Of the four, John is the most creative and yet the most down-to-earth. Michelle is the prettiest with the least to say. Denny is the most cynical, with the broadest mind. And Cass—well Cass is just Cass, known and loved by all.

John does most of the writing and is also responsible for the arrangements. He is something of an enigma unto himself—a tall, thin, angular person with an apologetic moustache and large, sorrowful eyes, who was actually educated at Annapolis, America's leading naval academy and the equivalent of Dartmouth. He was musically weaned in the standard folk tradition—no food and a second-hand guitar—and he used to sing around Greenwich Village with a powerful folk group called the Journeymen. His writing, he claims, is also inspired by early jazz influences.

Denny is British. This always surprised people because he has an American accent. He is Irish-Canadian but his pleasantly cynical approach displays his Celtic origins. He is 25, occasionally bearded and totally unable to comprehend the size of his newly-found social significance.

At 21, Michelle is the youngest. She's waiflike or sylphlike, or whatever - adjective - you - care - to - dream - up - like.

And then there is Cass. P. J. Proby, currently prospering on these shores, in image at least, claims that Cass slept on his floor last time he was here. This is possible. There are few people around today who haven't slept on Proby's floor at one time or another.

She buzzes around in a pint-sized jalopy with a sticker which firmly states: "Paul Butterfield Is Blue And Beautiful".

Cass is large, lovely and somehow unpredictable. With glossy chestnut hair and penetrating green eyes. Her voice is lusty.

The Mama's and the Papa's arrived at the offices of Dunhill Records looking tanned and hungry following an eight-month sojourn in the Virgin Isles. They were living in tents on the foliage behind the beach lazily strumming their guitars and singing their music to the curious natives.

This is, perhaps, important, for it uncovers yet another element of these extraordinary people—they hate to work. They were coerced into their present tour by sharp-suited agents and other aliens and although they love to sing and have their praises sung, their respective backgrounds render them without ambitions—and the making of money is one of them.

The Governor of the Virgin Isles rejected them, largely, it would seem, for wasting their own time and that of his Islanders. So they arrived at Dunhill.

Lou Adler was seen to smile for the first time since "Eve Of Destruction" brought his second million and beaming paternally, he took them into the studio.

REDFERNS

Everybody must get stonewalled: Dylan meets the press in 1966

DYLAN'S PRESS DECEPTION

NME meets the 'rebel' in a London hotel suite

NME, 31 May 1966, page 3

Hair bristling about like a Fijian suffering from a severe electrical shock, wearing a blue suede jacket and white striped trousers, Bob Dylan meandered into a suite of the May Fair Hotel last week followed by a squad of cameramen and sound engineers, the latter to record the "press reception".

A large gentleman, with a grey top hat and movie camera permanently affixed to his shoulder, lurched about the room like Quasimodo, alternately scratching his ear and his nose, with the occasional break to 'whirr' the machine in the face of perplexed reporters.

A lady in grey denims waved what appeared to be two huge grey frankfurters about, but they proved to be microphones attached to tape recorders. We were apparently being taped for posterity. For some 15 minutes, photographers exposed innumerable rolls of film at Dylan looking bored, slumped on a window sill. Finally he removed his dark glasses as a bonus to the cameramen, but somehow managed to look exactly the same. Ken Pitt, surely the year's most optimistic publicist, announced that Mr Dylan would now answer questions.

"Is this a microphone?" enquired Mr Dylan about a large cylindrical object on the desk under his nose. Having ascertained that it was indeed a microphone, Dylan signified he was ready to begin by giving a slight grunt and shifting his chair a bit.

"Which musicians have you brought with you?"

After this question had been asked again, then rephrased several times, Bob replied: "You want names?"

The reporter said this might be helpful.

"Gus, Frank, Mitch…" mumbled Dylan.

Posterity?

For posterity's sake I framed a question which might be construed as "being aware", as Quasimodo aimed his mechanical hump at me. Why is it that the titles of his recent singles, like 'Rainy Day Women #12 & 35', apparently bore no connections to the lyric?

"It has every significance," returned Dylan. "Have you been down to north Mexico?"

"Not recently."

"Well, I can't explain it to you then."

It would appear that the authorities in Washington, Baltimore and Houston have worked out the explanation, for they have banned 'Rainy Day Women…' as being an alleged approval of LSD and marijuana drugs. A dubious honour that Dylan shares with The Byrds' 'Eight Miles High', also banned in those States last week.

I tried to get him to talk about Paul Simon, whom he phoned recently in the US, and about Bob Lind.

"Never heard of them," obliged Mr Dylan. With that I declared my innings closed and watched with interest as the others got batted about.

"Bob, your hair has got me worried," said one lady reporter. "How do you get it like that?"

"How do I get it like that?"

"Yes, how do you get it like that?"

"I comb it like that."

Someone tried shock treatment: "Are you married?"

"I don't want to lie to you. It would be misleading if I told you 'Yes'," Dylan declared and in the same breath: "I brought my wife over here on the last visit and no one took any notice of her." A suggestion was made that he was secretly married to Joan Baez.

"Joan Baez was an accident," returned Mr Dylan.

Dylan's good friend, folk singer Dana Gillespie, was mentioned. Dylan brightened visibly – he practically tore his face in half in his effort to smile.

"Is Dana here?" he asked. "Bring her out. I got some baskets for her."

Regretfully Dana was not there and the conversation reverted to monotone inanities again.

Revelations!

We discovered in quick succession that Dylan cannot see too well on Tuesdays… his toenails don't fit him… he considered Peter Lorre the world's greatest folk singer… all his songs protest about something… he has just written a book in one week about spiders… and he didn't know who the gentleman in the top hat was.

"I thought he was with you," he returned, deadpan.

The lady with the giant frankfurter mike torpedoed it forward so as not to miss a syllable of this sparkling repartee.

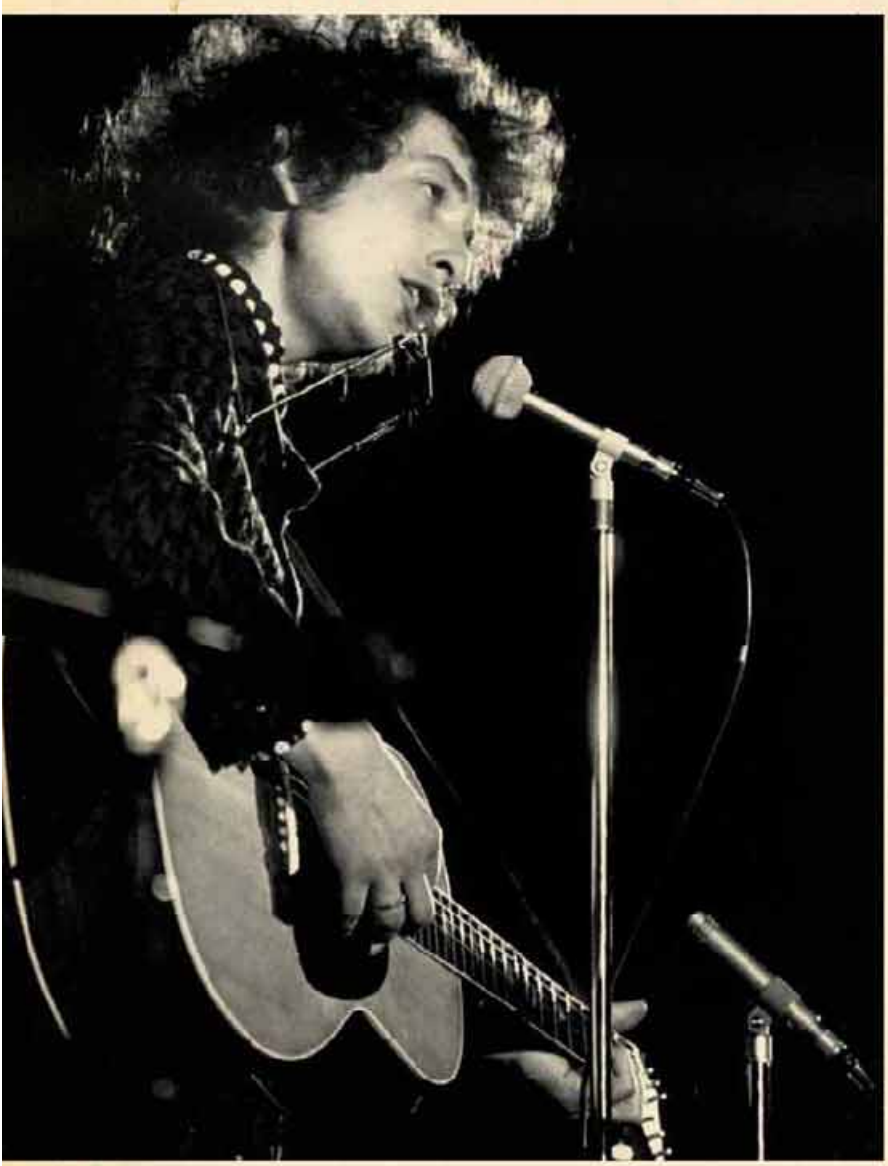
As the reporters filed out of the suite I took one of Dylan's undercover agents to one side (I knew he was a Dylan man as he had dark glasses on) and enquired why a man of Dylan's obvious intelligence bothered to arrange this farce of a meeting.

"Man," he extolled, "Dylan just wanted us to come along and record a press reception so we could hear how ridiculous and infantile all reporters are."

I stumbled brokenly back to my Plasticine, the sandpit, my chalk slate at the *NME*! But you've got to admit there's only one Dylan – thank goodness!

Keith Altham

DYLAN VIEW ON THE BIG BOO



Disc and Music Echo, 4 June 1966, page 5

UPROAR at Bob Dylan concert

"THIS is my last visit here," said an angry BOB DYLAN at his final British concert at London's Albert Hall on Friday. Sadly, some of the audience didn't seem to care. They hooted, barracked and stalked out in protest when, after the interval, Bob appeared with his electrified backing group. Dylan's excursion into rock-n-roll angered them. They wanted only the pure guitar-accompanied folk singing of the first half.

Dylan handled the aggressors extremely well. "Oh, you beautiful people," he said, sending them up. And, referring to the songs: "Aw, it's all the same stuff . . ."

"Go Home!" "Get the group off!" "Drop dead, Dylan." Bob suffered appalling treatment from some hecklers. But he battled on. And though the dreadful reception he got was unforgiveable, the rowdies had some justification.

Shambles of noise

We don't mind a wailing backing group, but MUST it be so LOUD? A lot of Dylan's talent lies in his words, and few could be heard above a caterwauling din, appallingly tasteless, thudding drumming, and electrification gone mad.

The electrified performance was a shambles of noise—a vivid contrast from the first half, which was the great Dylan-with-guitar at his best, singing with more clarity than ever, putting across beautiful songs like "Desolation Row" with a sensitivity sadly lacking from his band-backed mess.

True, some of the second-half had a bit of ferocious appeal. And when he wound up with "Like A Rolling Stone," he sang the words: "You're gonna have to get used to it" as if they had some hidden meaning.

Let's hope he either changes his mind or rethinks his group's function. Dylan is great, but with that sort of row going on behind him, he insults his own talent.

RAY COLEMAN

MM, 4 June 1966, page 13

In an amazing speech from the stage of London's Albert Hall, Bob Dylan denied suggestions that some of his songs are 'drug songs', attempted to explain his changing music and indicated he wouldn't appear in Britain again.

This all came out at his concert there last Friday.

After Dylan had been singing for some minutes, accompanying himself on guitar and harmonica, he stopped and began talking to the huge, hushed audience.

"I'm not going to play any more concerts in England," he announced. "So I'd just like to say this next song is what your English musical papers would call a 'drug song'. I never have and never will write a 'drug song'. I don't know how to. It's not a 'drug song', it's just vulgar."

Dylan carried on with songs like 'Desolation Row' and 'It's All Over Now, Baby Blue'. Then he was joined by the group for his electric-sound songs.

Dylan denied suggestions that some of his songs are 'drug songs', attempted to explain his changing music and indicated he wouldn't appear in Britain again

Explained Dylan: "I like all my old songs. It's just that things change all the time. Everybody knows that. I never said they were 'rubbish' *(he pronounced the word in a Northern accent)*. That's not in my vocabulary. I wouldn't use the word rubbish if it was lying on the stage and I could pick it up.

"This music that you are going to hear – if anyone has any suggestions on how it could be played better, or how the words could be improved…? – we've been playing this music since we were ten years old. Folk music was just an interruption and was very useful. If you don't like it, that's fine.

"This is not English music you are listening to. You haven't really heard American music before. I want now to say what you're hearing is just songs. You're not hearing anything else but words and sounds. You can take it or leave it. If there's something you disagree with, that's great.

NME, 5 August 1966, page 9

DYLAN BREAKS NECK

Bob Dylan sustained broken neck vertebrae and concussion in an accident at the weekend, cables June Harris. The back wheel of the motor-cycle he was riding near his home in New York locked and the machine spun out of control.

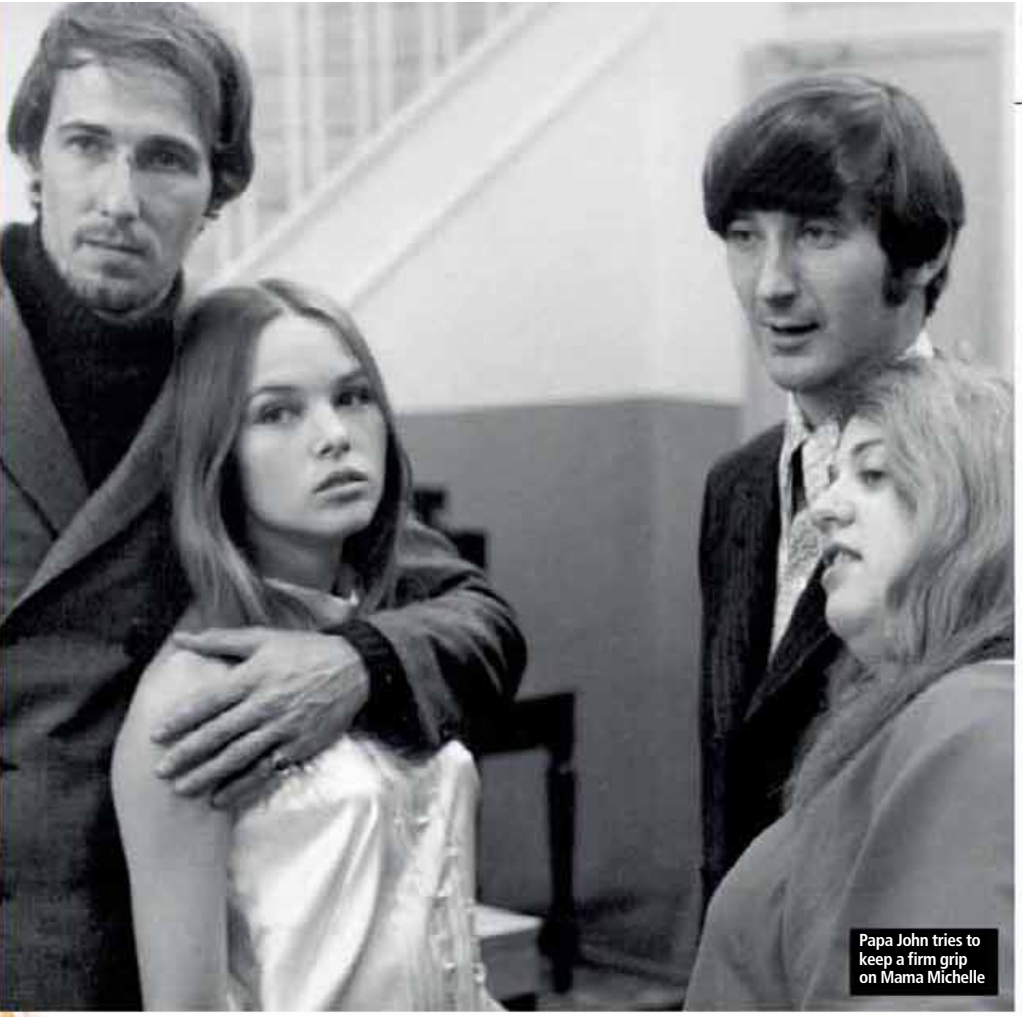
All Dylan's dates have been cancelled for the next two months at least. He is recuperating with his wife Sara at an unknown place.

Troggs-Fury show

The Troggs and Billy Fury have

"I'm sick of people asking: 'What does it mean?' It means nothing." Here Dylan was interrupted by shouts, including "Woody Guthrie would have turned in his grave" and "rubbish". But the majority of the audience wanted to hear Dylan out and shouted down the hecklers.

REDFERNS


Papa John tries to keep a firm grip on Mama Michelle

The morning after

The Mamas And The Papas talk to NME the day after a late night with John Lennon and Paul McCartney

NME, 24 June 1966, page 8

The first thing you discover about The Mamas And The Papas is that they are not – although Papa John is married to Mama Michelle. The beautiful Michelle was, unfortunately, the one member of the folk family unable to make the British holiday and is at present visiting the Mexican family who cared for her as a child.

When I located the group last Thursday evening they had been entertaining Beatles John Lennon and Paul McCartney until the early hours in a large residence off Montague Square, formerly Mick Jagger's abode.

Papa Denny answered the door and, smiling dreamily, he showed me up three flights of stairs. We entered a vast room hung with oil paintings of old soldiers and seated behind a huge table was the staggering sight of Mama Cass in a yellow nightie, with a single pink plastic roller perched upon her head.

"Sorry about this," smiled Cass, combing her lank tresses, "but John and Paul didn't leave until about 9 o'clock and I had to wash my hair."

Cass has a bit of a 'thing' about John. "He was charming, courteous and intelligent. Witty, amusing and entertaining," extolled Cass. "It was kind of like a climax for us – meeting The Beatles. We just sat around and talked and Paul played the piano for hours on end. They were everything I hoped they would be."

"I expected them to be a little nasty," said Papa John, who was wearing dark glasses and what looked suspiciously like a white tea cosy on his head. "I don't really mean nasty. But they were so natural."

Surprise

The popular misconception of what young millionaires should be like and what The Beatles turn out to be always seems to come as a refreshing surprise to visiting American artists.

In another corner of the room I was introduced to Doris Day's son, Terry Melcher, who was thrashing at a Spanish guitar. A lovely blonde with green eyes, matching sweater and blue trousers mysteriously appeared and poured me a cup of the most revolting tea I have ever tasted, from a huge blue pot.

We talked about "folk-people".

"Donovan is our kind of person," said John, removing his dark glasses, and with his drooping moustache and rustic hat he looked like a mountain man from a John Steinbeck novel.

"Everyone loves Don in the States and although he has not had a hit out there recently, the clubs are packed when he appears."

Food

Rattlings in the kitchen seemed to produce vibrations in Cass, who is very strong on vibrations. She gets them onstage, created by a feeling between an audience and herself.

"I hope that's food," said Cass, hearkening to the clatter of crockery. A monstrous pile of luncheon meat sandwedges appeared and Cass dug in.

A rather abstruse discussion began as to the origins of The Mamas And The Papas' music and John monopolised the conversation with remarks like "all our songs are written from our own experiences"… "the songwriters of today deal with existence rather than imagination"… "one of the reasons we took this house with virtually no furniture is that staying in luxury hotels only leads to a withdrawal from life".

Sausage scene

In the "out" scene with the group are The Four Seasons, who they do not dig, and Gene Pitney, whom Cass describes as having "a dollar sign hung around every note he sings". John described Bob Dylan's 'Rainy Day Women…' as "carpentry music", and a strange remark was passed about not being able to obtain beef sausages in the States!

Denny, who watched progress through half-closed eyes in an amused bewilderment, contributed his say on the sausage scene.

"Now that's not so," he drawled languidly. "I'm sure that somewhere in that great country of ours, there is a place where you buy sausages."

Backing group

It's not yet certain who The Mamas And The Papas will appear with when they return from their autumn tour. Cass mentioned that The Hollies wanted to but they wanted top billing.

One thing is certain and that is when the group returns they will have their own backing unit.

"Fast Eddy *(drums)* is a kind of juvenile delinquent who steals hub-caps during the concerts," grinned John. "Joe Osbourne *(bass)* has played for artists like Dick Rivers and Rick Nelson and he's the best and 'The Doctor' *(lead guitar)* is a friend of mine who specialises in deafening bird calls. He was frightened by an aviary in the Santiago Zoo when he was a child."

Nice friendly folk The Mamas And The Papas – I look forward to meeting the other attractive quarter in the autumn. ***Keith Altham***

Denny takes care of Cass' hair before the luncheon meat sandwiches arrive

Disc and Music Echo, 21 January 1967, page 16

CAT: WHAT A DRAG IT IS BEING YOUNG

The lyrics in Cat Stevens' songs would imply that he was a simple person involved with the simple things in life. Working for a rotten boss, loving his dog, here comes his baby looking fine. But his attitude to life is far removed from the Brian Wilson image of soft, understandable things. He has a habit, unnerving, of falling off sofas when you interview him, sticking on his dark glasses, hugging three orange cushions and generally rolling around. A psychiatrist might say this showed a distinct lack of security.

"I used to feel very sorry for myself. When I was about 15 I used to lock myself away and draw and think I was the only person who ever thought about anything. It's God's gift just to me, I used to think. Then one day I was talking to my friend and found out that he could think too and that was a gas. I really started writing because I was lonely. My parents ran the shop all day and there was me stuck in the middle of Soho. I grew up very quickly.

"My parents didn't really have a happy life and I wasn't really happy. I never had a big family thing. I used to see my mates and then around 5pm they would go home and have a tea time. I never did have a tea time because my parents weren't in. I used to think it was pretty rough. It made me a bad mixer. Now I hate parties. Immediately I walk into a room full of people I think – bang there goes my identity. Terrible."

All these things contribute to the being of Cat Stevens, songwriter. He locked himself away in Soho and wrote and wrote, knowing that one day he would be discovered.

"It's funny because although I was lonely I always felt secure within myself until I came into the business. Now I'm frightened. I was scared stiff that '…Dog' would be a gigantic smash because of trying to follow it up. As it was I spent longer on 'Matthew…' than on anything else I've ever written.

"All I know is I'm a liar. I get into violent arguments with myself through lying"

"I'm not mixed up but when I try to work out what I am, it worries me because I don't know. All I know is I'm a liar. I lie all the time. And I find myself getting into violent arguments with myself through lying. And I'm very money conscious. Well, why not admit it? I have two worlds. The world of my music which I love and the world of money which is great. But I like to know where my money is all the time and what's happening to it. It worries me. I like money."

It is often hard to realise that Cat is only 18. He hates being young and is looking forward to being an old man with an enthusiasm that is almost terrifying.

"I think being a kid now is hard. That's why they all look old and worried. The pressures are too great. They don't get a chance to really enjoy themselves. They should have a new world, more than any other generation. But they're still put down. The older generation seems to be very stubborn. When I'm old I'm sure I'll be very happy. I'm looking forward to it and the sooner it happens the better. It's peace of mind. It's knowing what it's all about and not having to chase yourself round in circles. Being old would be great." ***Penny Valentine***

SINGLES

Disc and Music Echo, 4 February 1967, page 15

DONOVAN
Mellow Yellow Pye

The trouble with both of the last Donovan records is that they were played so much, for such a long time before a sign of them was seen in the shops it nearly drove you to distraction. The other night I must have heard this at least ten times in half an hour. So now it's hard to be constructive about it. It's a very catchy record and has none of that harsh insistence 'Sunshine Superman' had, which is well since it's about being mellow. But what's it all about, Donovan dear? I admit it now: ***"I'm just wild about Saffron"*** and the rest leave me more than bewildered. Inner meaning? Perhaps. But then we're not all Freud.
Penny Valentine

NME, 31 December 1966, p4

CAT STEVENS
Matthew And Son Deram

This is an extremely good disc – novel, yet topical. The title is that of a business concern in the city, and the lyric explains how the employees are slaves of routine. Full credit to Mike Hurst's production, which opens with a rippling, tinkling, harpsichord effect, which breaks into a palpitating beat, which reflects the busy bustle of office life. Dancing strings and brass enter later. I would have welcomed a stronger melody, but I think it's a hit.

Flip: another self-penned item. Has a jaunty bounce beat, with clanking piano and brass. Another fascinating and well-conceived lyric.
Derek Johnson

NME, 21 October 1966, page 5

NEW to the charts

CAT AND DOG HIT!

By Norrie Drummond

A NEW singer and a new label appear in the NME Chart for the first time this week. Cat Stevens' "I Love My Dog" on Decca's new Deram label enters at No. 28.

Seventeen-year-old Cat, who was discovered and recorded by former member of the Springfields Mike Hurst, was educated in Sweden, although he was born in London.

Cat has been writing songs for some time, and apart from "I Love My Dog," has also penned his follow-up single, the title of which is being kept secret at the moment.

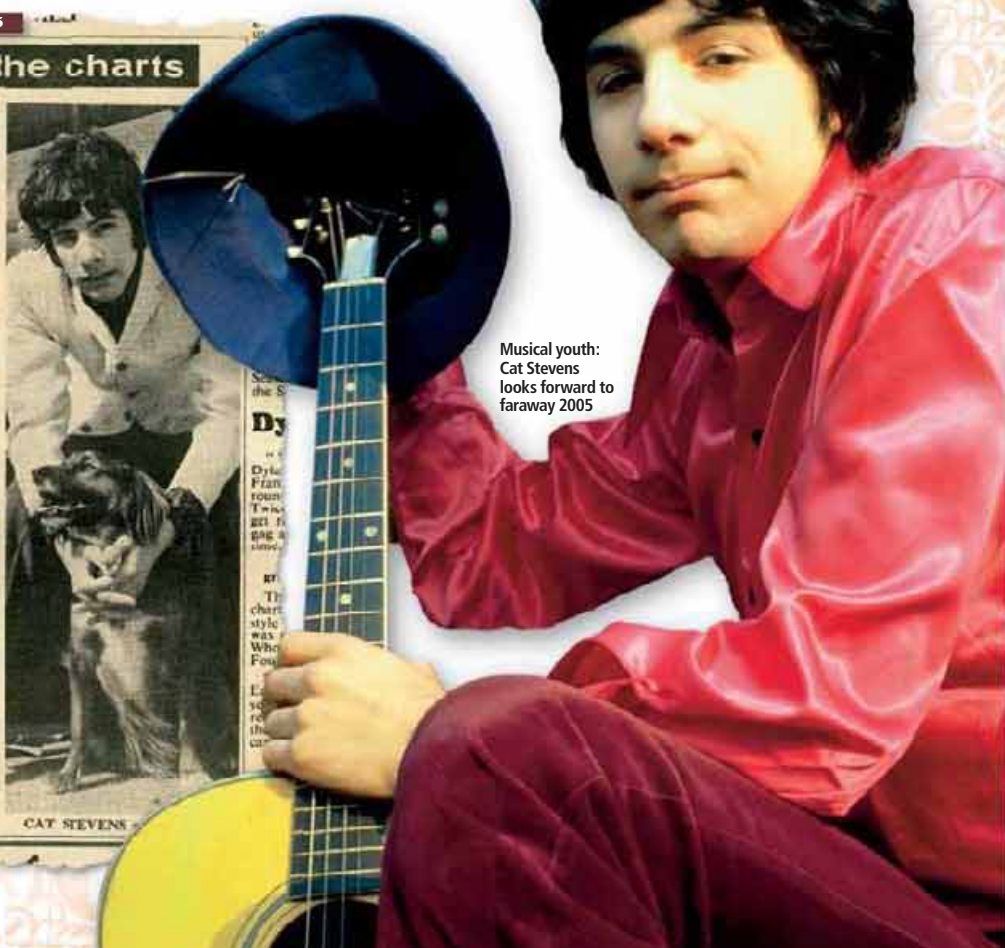
Several other artists, including Paul and Barry Ryan and Bobby Goldsboro, have shown interest in his songs.

Cat was a student at Hammersmith Art College and dabbling in song-writing when his brother David introduced him to Mike Hurst, who soon realised Cat's ability should be furthered.

Mike recorded Cat and took the tapes to Decca, who decided to issue the disc on their new label. "I Love My Dog" will also introduce the new label to America when the record is issued there next Friday.

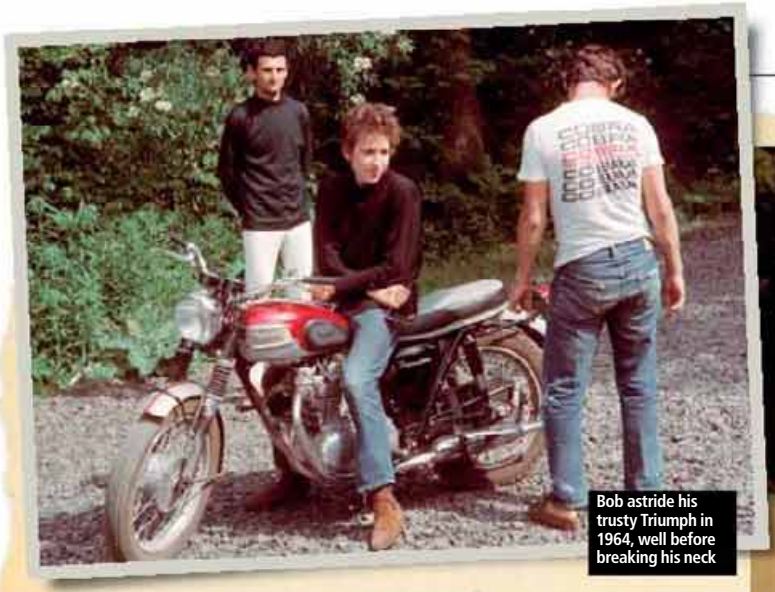
Cat—real name Stephen Georgiou—also plays piano and guitar and, despite his foreign origin, lives in the heart of London's Soho, above a Greek restaurant owned by his father.

CAT STEVENS



Musical youth: Cat Stevens looks forward to faraway 2005

RED FERNS



Bob astride his trusty Triumph in 1964, well before breaking his neck

BOB DYLAN MYSTERY DEEPENS

NME, 4 November 1966, page 12

Three months ago, the *NME* reported that Bob Dylan had been involved in a motorbike accident and sustained a broken neck vertebrae and concussion. It was stated that it would be necessary for the singer to convalesce for a couple of months before resuming his normal engagements. But we are now entering the fourth month since Dylan's accident, and there is still no sign of him emerging from hibernation.

Speculation is now rife as to whether the bike upset was far more serious than was at first intimated. His fans are clamouring for news of their idol – particularly in the States where the Dylan mystery has almost attained crisis level – but there's nothing to pacify them. Just silence! To all intents and purposes, Bob Dylan has completely disappeared.

This was no ordinary convalescence – he didn't just slip away to some country retreat where he could nurse his injuries. He severed all connections with the life he had known, and took off for a secluded hide-out – where, presumably, he has been ever since.

Many of his closest friends don't know where he is, or even how badly he was hurt. It's likely that only two people have known Dylan's whereabouts since the accident – his agent Albert B Grossman (and he's saying nothing) and beat poet Allen Ginsberg, who is probably Bob's best friend.

And now, as a spark to further rumours, Dylan's first book *Tarantula* – scheduled for this autumn – has been postponed indefinitely. What's more, a two-hour TV special, in which Bob was due to appear in mid-November, has been cancelled. This has given rise to suggestions that he was much more badly hurt than we thought – and even to persistent stories that his career is at an end. His agent has dismissed such chatter as nonsense, but admits that he doesn't know when Dylan will emerge from the shadows.

Two weeks ago, America's *World Journal Tribune* tracked down a remote hide-out where Bob had been staying – a rambling old house in an almost inaccessible village – on the Cape Cod peninsula in Massachusetts. Confronted with this information, Ginsberg admitted that he had visited Dylan there and had taken him some reading material. But when the *Tribune*'s reporter called at the house, no one was prepared to say whether or not the singer was still in residence.

In this country, we are affected only by the let-up in the flow of his record releases. CBS have absolutely nothing of Dylan's scheduled for release in the foreseeable future – although it's always possible, of course, that they could take a single from a previously issued album. Meanwhile, the great Bob Dylan mystery deepens. Fans are asking whether his injuries are taking longer to mend that expected – or whether, having found seclusion, he appreciates it so much that he's reluctant to forgo it. Or is there some other explanation that we don't know about? If not, why the cloak-and-dagger stuff?

Derek Johnson

BOB DYLAN
Blonde On Blonde
CBS

MM, 13 August 1966, page 11

Bob's back with a supergloss gatefold double album, fifty shillings worth of all that's best on the American rock scene. For your money you'll get three previously issued singles, 'Rainy Day Women #12&35', 'I Want You', 'One Of Us Must Know', and a 12 minute side of 'Sad Eyed Lady Of The Lowlands', an appealing hymnic chant which ranks with the best of the new Dylan. Scattered elsewhere among the four sides are his emotive 'Visions Of Johanna'– one of the successes on his recent tour – the rocking "Most Likely You Go Your Way And I'll Go Mine', 'Obviously Five Believers' – a raunchy blues featuring Charlie McCoy on harmonica – and 'Memphis Blues Again' taken at a snappy pace with some great lyrics about Shakespeare and all that jazz. It's hardly necessary to mention that this is all Dylan plus heretical organ, electric guitars etc, and good at that.

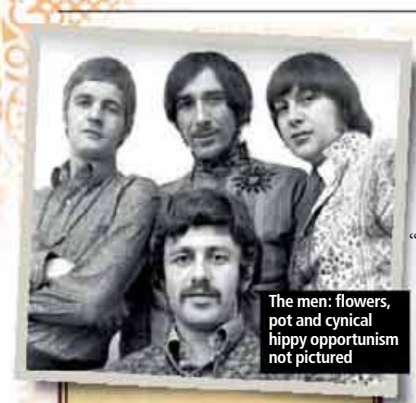
THE BYRDS
Younger Than Yesterday
CBS

MM, 13 May 1967, page 11

If it was possible to hear every note played at a Beatles concert it would be unfair to say that the sound could never be as good as their records. The Byrds usually play before silent audiences, void of screamers, and unfortunately they are all too often condemned for "sounding bad". But it would be a foolish critic who ignored their records, just because their "live" performances were not up to expectation. And if you ignore this album you are not only foolish – but deaf! It surpasses all other Byrds works, being rich in sparkling ideas, the most incredible feeling and, what's more, beauty. The singing and playing of guitarist Jim McGuinn is fantastic; bass man Chris Hillman is positively out of this world and his enhancement to the lyrics and feel of 'Everybody's Been Burned' is almost too incredible. The concept of 'Mind Gardens' is just as mind-blowing. The lyrical flow of 'Renaissance Fair' makes one of the most beautiful songs under this sun of sound; 'So You Want To Be A Rock'N'Roll Star' takes on a dry Mexican sound with the trumpet of Hugh Maskela; 'My Back Pages' is another delightful Dylan-Byrds amalgamation; and for those of you who dug 'The Lear Jet Song' on 'Fifth Dimension', there is another freaky tune about digging Martians, 'CTA 102'. The Byrds are beautiful – there's no other word for it.

It's rich in sparkling ideas, the most incredible feeling and, what's more, beauty

JOHN BYRNE COOKE/KEVIN CUMMINS/REDFERNS



The men: flowers, pot and cynical hippy opportunism not pictured

I'm no professional flower child says Scott McKenzie

NME, 5 August 1967, page 3

"I am not a professional flower child," stressed Scott McKenzie over the transatlantic phone wire. "I'd rather carry a flower than a gun. But I do not like uniforms or the way certain people are packaging 'love', to be sold in shops.

"I wish I had the courage to arrive in England with a conventional crew-cut, suit and tie, because the wrong emphasis is being placed on the explanation of what is happening out here on the West Coast. It is – as Andrew Oldham has said – nothing to do with the way you look or dress. It is a state of mind!

"The accent on peaceful thinking has been going on out here on the West Coast for a year. I am pleased to have helped."

The good things coming out of the West Coast Scene are essentially a lack of hostility among men and a sense of brotherhood – not exactly a new concept, Scott agreed, but it is unusual to find it being practised rather than preached.

"When John *(Phillips, of The Mamas And The Papas)* and I got together for 'San Francisco' we talked about things that we really believe in and it became a labour of love. We knew the record would be big. It is the way people are thinking.

"I should hate to see these ideas become big business so that the truth is lost under the money to be made.

Scott is at present trying to fit in his life around the success of his disc. His trip to England in September has been postponed.

"At the moment my whole life is postponed," he said. "But I very much want to visit England and it will happen."

We attempted to fill in the years between Scott's being in The Journeymen, where he sang with Papa John, and becoming a solo artist.

"Well, I did a lot of odd jobs and grooved around a bit," said Scott vaguely. "I did some acting for the Diners Theatre. I played a 50-year-old General in *John Loves Mary*, which was a hit on Broadway way back in 1949. In the original production Ronald Reagan played the role I had!"

Which brought us nicely to the question – Ronald Reagan for President?

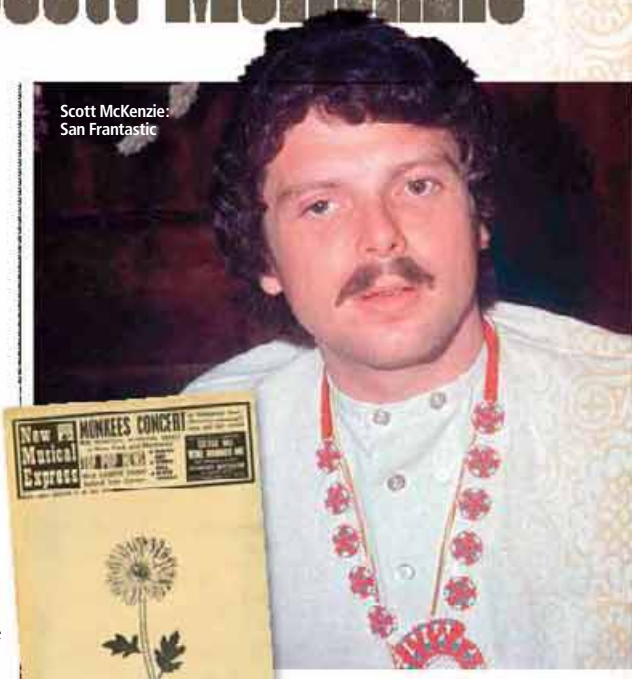
"I think he believes he already is," Scott cracked. "But God, I hope not!"

People who have only heard Scott sing on the 'Frisco' disc are in for a shock, if he reverts to the style I have heard him use on earlier material.

Which people influence Scott most in the composing field?

"I admire Dylan, and Lennon and McCartney."

Keith Altham



Scott McKenzie: San Frantastic

FLOWER POT MEN HOPE TO STAY ON THE SCENE

NME, 16 September 1967, page 12

I've often wondered what the result would be if some enterprising manager recruited the most talented members of the best groups in Britain, moulded them and recorded them before letting them loose on the public. To a certain extent that's what has been done with The Flower Pot Men, whose 'Let's Go To San Francisco' climbs to Number Eight in this week's *NME* chart.

Two of the group, Neil Landon and Tony Burrows, were with The Ivy League until two weeks ago, while the other members, Rob Shaw and Pete Nelson, used to provide vocal backing on other people's discs.

The result of teaming the four of them together has so far been highly successful, but will it continue?

"I like wearing a kaftan because it's so comfortable" Neil Landon

"I certainly hope so," Neil told me when he popped into the *NME* office. "And I don't really see why our next record shouldn't be a hit. I think we have quite a distinctive sound which I hope appeals to the public."

Like every good flower child, Neil was wearing a colourful kaftan and an assortment of bells and beads hung round his neck.

Did he wear them because he was a Flower Pot Man or was it because he was genuinely interested in the present cult?

"I like wearing a kaftan simply because it's so comfortable," he said, stooping to pick a bell which had fallen off its chain. "But I don't really think many people will be running round in clothes like these when winter comes.

"Most kids who are wearing hippy clothes now only do so because it's in fashion – not because of any great interest in yoga or meditation. But I do think that as a result of the Flower Cult, young people are becoming much more aware of what's going on around them."

Would The Flower Pot Men follow up their hit with another flowery record?

"As long as it's a strong melody I don't mind." ***Norrie Drummond***

Disc and Music Echo, 28 October 1967, page 14

★ NEW YORK DATELINE by NANCY LEWIS

Dave Crosby quits the Byrds!

DAVE CROSBY is OUT of the **Byrds!** The rhythm guitar star — who was featured on all their records, including "Mr. Tambourine Man"—quit this week.

He is replaced by **Gene Clark,** who used to be a fifth member of the group, and played tambourine. Gene tried for a solo career for a short time, but he's now picking up Dave's rhythm guitar and re-joining the Byrds.

The new-look group made their debut on Sunday night on the Smothers Brothers TV show.

• The Apollo theatre in New York had yet another cancellation this week. Tammi Terrell, scheduled to appear with bill-topper Marvin Gaye, [illegible] not appearing. Last week, [illegible] that, yes, Procol [illegible] it has been quite a while

DAVE: OUT

GENE: IN

REX FEATURES/SKR PHOTOS

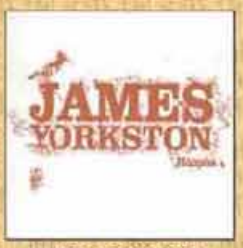
GET FOLKED

RELEASES FROM CARGO RECORDS

THE SINGING ADAMS
PROBLEMS
Debut album by The Singing Adams, a new project from Steven Adams, the gentleman we know as genius songwriter, singer, and guitar player with The Broken Family Band
TRACK & FIELD - CD

JOSEPHINE FOSTER
HAZEL EYES, I WILL LEAD YOU
Earthen hymns, cosmic madrigals, flapper blues & acid folk are sewn into one luminescent patch from one of America's most adventurous and pioneering songstresses.
LOCUST MUSIC - CD / LP

JOSEPHINE FOSTER & THE SUPPOSED
ALL THE LEAVES ARE GONE
After a 180 degree shift in style, Josephine embraces her rock and roll heart & intuitively summons up the mojo of legendary songstress Patti Smith & the defiant beauty of early period Jefferson Airplane "Exuberant and hard hitting."
LOCUST - CD



JAMES YORKSTON
HOOPOE
Brand new mini album recorded exclusively for Houston Party. "Hoopoe" features five new and exclusive songs, plus one re-working of the song "Heron" from the album "Just Beyond The River" album.
HOUSTON PARTY - MCD

JUDEE SILL - *JUDEE SILL*
Judee Sill's debut album heralded a major new talent in the airy, contemporary folk world of the early '70s. The essence of the music is folk, the execution pop: the songs feel like a comfort blanket, a statement of hope from a troubled soul.
WATER - CD

JUDEE SILL - *HEART FOOD*
The supporting cast of top L.A. studio musicians solidifies Sill's unique brand of folk-flavored pop, which moves from introspective meanderings to loping rock, often within a single song.
WATER - CD

TUNNG
MOTHERS & DAUGHTERS
Eerily beautiful folktronica melded with acoustic guitars, soulful vocals & raw percussive beats. Undeniable.
STATIC CARAVAN - CD

MICHAEL WESTON KING
ABSENT FRIENDS
"MWK evokes the emotion of Springsteen and the troubadour spirit of Dylan whilst keeping his own powerful hold on every song". 4/5 What's on. Widely hearlded as one of Britain's "finest songwriters"
MURDERED WITH KINDNESS - CD

JOHN HOWARD
THE DANGEROUS HOURS
"30 years on he still sounds astonishing 'a man making up for lost time with enviable panache"The Guardian. For fans of Rufus Wainwright.
BAD PRESSINGS - CD

CHRIS T-T - *9 RED SONGS*
Chris T-T returns with an album of overtly political songs, taking in Blair, Iraq, The Countryside Alliance, The Daily Mail & Billy Bragg. At turns hilarious & barbed it is undoubtedly his best work to date.
SNOWSTORM - CD

CANDIDATE - *NUADA*
Inspired by cult movie classic "The Wicker Man" Nuada features contributions from Alex Donohoe, Jason Hazeley (of Ben & Jason) and a guest appearance by British folk legend Bert Jansch.
SNOWSTORM - CD

THE BROKEN FAMILY BAND
COLD WATER SONGS
The classic debut album from UK country trailblazers.Features 'Devil in The Details' & 'At The Back Of The Chapel'. "Like Pavement covering Nashville standards" (NME)
SNOWSTORM - CD

VARIOUS ARTISTS
AMERICAN PRIMITIVE VOL. I
RAW PRE-WAR GOSPEL
(1926-1936)
77-minutes of gut-bucket,early gospel from the collections of Gayle Dean Wardlow and John Fahey, complete with a liner notes and photos.
REVENANT - 2CD

VARIOUS ARTISTS
AMERICAN PRIMITIVE VOL II
PRE-WAR REVENANTS
(1897-1939)
At once a collection of secret blueprints for a raw musics revolution and a testament to the enduring power of great art to shock, confound, inspire and sustain.
John Fahey's final curated work for Revenant.
REVENANT - 2CD

CHRISTINA CARTER & ANDREW MACGREGOR
MY CAT IS AN ALIEN
FROM THE EARTH TO THE SPHERES VOL 4
American queen of psyche-free-folk music Christina Carter (Charalambides, Scorces) with Andrew MacGregor (Gown) bring us"We know when we are thinking about each other" MCIAA's track "The circle of life & death" is probably the most melodic piece in all MCIAA's career to date.
VERY FRIENDLY - CD / OPAX - LP

MAGIC CAR - *FAMILY MATTERS*
Magic Car follow up their critically-acclaimed debut with this stunning new collection, which underlines their place at the very summit of the UK's burgeoning Americana scene.
TINY DOG - CD

CARGO RECORDS

WWW.CARGORECORDS.CO.UK

HMV
top dog for music dvd games

Melody Maker

January 27, 1968 — 9d weekly

DATELINE: NEW YORK

BOB DYLAN BACK, FANS RAVE

by CAROLYN REYNOLDS

BOB DYLAN made a triumphant comeback last Saturday—at New York's Carnegie Hall in a concert tribute to the late Woody Guthrie.

For 15 minutes fans clapped, stamped, whistled and shouted while Dylan waited to sing his three songs. It was his first stage appearance since he broke his neck in a motor cycle smash in August 1966.

After a nervous start, he obviously enjoyed himself and had to be smuggled out of the hall to avoid the hundreds of fans waiting outside to see him.

TURN TO PAGE 10

Love Affair jump to top

KINK DAVE SOLOS

—but no group split

COME WITH THE MM ON A... SUNSHINE SUPER

DISC and MUSIC ECHO 1s

NOVEMBER 12, 1969 — EVERY THURSDAY

Wilson Pickett show here next week TURN TO PAGE 7

Johnny Cash, quiet man at the top TURN TO PAGE 13

Dave Mattacks and Tyger Hutchins who were the CATTLE dog

FAIRPORT BACK ON THE ROAD!

DISC and MUSIC ECHO 1s

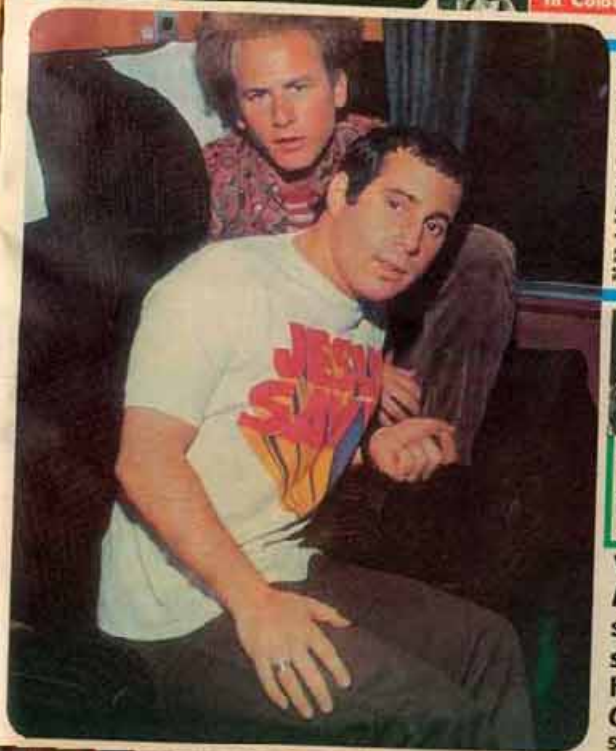
AUGUST 17, 1968 — USA 20c

BEATLES' 7-mi... single sensatio...

Full Story: Page 5

BARRY G... making o...

In Colour: Pa...



Messa... Paul's...

ARETHA: a blast at critics Page 8

Why doe... Amen Cor... star Andy... sing with his mouth CLOSED?

See Page 8

Melody Maker

APRIL 13, 1968 — 1s weekly

DONOVAN FOR ESTHER & ABI SHOW

Duo plan another British tour

DONOVAN is the latest star guest superstar for the Esther and Abi Ofarim colour TV series which hits the screens on BBC-2 on May 18!

And Ofarims' manager Ady Semel states that the duo will do all in their power to make another tour of Britain in the Autumn.

DIFFICULT

SOLO

ESTHER

TITLE

ABI

BEATLES FILM NOT SHOWN IN AMERICA

CILLA/HOLLIES/LOUIS/inside

CHAPTER 3

1968-1969

DYLAN REAPPEARS, THE BRITISH FOLK SCENE BLOSSOMS AND CROSBY, STILLS AND NASH FORM THE FIRST FOLK ROCK SUPERGROUP

(L-r) Pete Seeger, Bob Dylan, Judy Collins and Arlo Guthrie at Carnegie Hall, January 20, 1968

PHOTOGRAPHER

THE RETURN OF DYLAN

Dylan makes his first public appearance since his mysterious motorcycle accident – fittingly enough at a tribute to his inspiration, Woody Guthrie

MM, 27 January 1968, page 10

Bob Dylan was back onstage for the first time in 18 months. The occasion was last Saturday's musical tribute to the late Woody Guthrie at New York's Carnegie Hall. The performers included Judy Collins, Arlo Guthrie, Richie Havens, Jack Elliott, Odetta, Tom Paxton and Pete Seeger – but everyone was there to see Dylan.

There is an expectant atmosphere in the audience filled with folkpeople and Woody's widow is heard describing the fantastic security arrangements for Dylan. Then the artists file on stage to sit in a row of chairs. Dylan wears a grey suit; blue shirt; high zippered, grey suede boots; no tie; and a grey diamond ring on his right hand. He looks healthy but nervous. His hair is long and curly, but not wild and he has a small ear-to-ear beard cut close. Dylan sits next to Paxton and chats quietly.

There is no audience hysteria for Dylan, but rather a sort of relieved affection

The programme begins with a narration by Robert Ryan and Will Geer, a personal friend of Guthrie's. Then it becomes quotations from Guthrie, leading into songs. Photos of the Dust Bowl are projected on a screen and Dylan turns to watch them closely. The audience is very quiet and there is a strong sense of sentimentality as the artists sing, alone and with each other.

Towards the end of the first half there is a pause while a backing group of electric bass, piano, organ, drums and electrified acoustic guitar sets up. Dylan walks to the microphone, holding his guitar as he always did. He waits for tumultuous applause to die down and then there is silence as he sings 'Grand Coulee Dam' to his own acoustic guitar, but no harp.

DAVID GAHR/ELLIOT LANDY–REDFERNS

He greets applause for this with shy smiles and nervous bobs of the head. Then into 'Dear Mr Roosevelt' and finally 'Ain't Got No Home In This World Anymore'. More applause as the audience welcome him back.

Nervousness seems to have disappeared and he walks offstage with the others, talking and laughing and looking more than glad to be there. The audience has been looking for signs of his accident, but there are none. As the lights go down in the second half, he is on stage again, and it is as though he had not been gone at all.

He doesn't sing alone in the second half, he does one verse of 'This Train Is Bound For Glory' and duets with Judy Collins on 'This Land Is Our Land', when Seeger succeeds in getting the audience to sing along. All nervousness gone, Dylan laughs and jokes with artists, waves to friends, enjoys himself a great deal.

The whole evening is being recorded by Columbia and a potential highlight of the record is Odetta. All the artists are in top form and interesting moments include Seeger and Havens in a duet. Arlo Guthrie, looking like a hippy in bright cranberry, has hardly any voice but much stage presence – and he is Woody's son.

The show closes with roof-raising applause which doesn't stop until Seeger says something to make the audience leave. Crowds hang around waiting for Dylan for a long time, but he has evaded them and no-one knows where he has gone. That he has been there is enough.

He seems different – that he is back after 18 months is different in itself. But the beard changes him and his hair doesn't look electric any more. Everything about him is intense, but as the strangeness wears off he will become more familiar.

The most startling change is in his voice. Very obvious, as on his LP, 'John Wesley Harding', is that he sings more than he used to. There is more melody and a lot of the harshness is gone. His voice sounds older, more mature. It is difficult to tell what effect this might have on his songs, since he sang only Guthrie numbers at the concert.

But none of the effect of his presence is missing. He still rivets attention on himself – as when he moves his hand slightly to the song, while everyone else taps feet and snaps fingers.

He is confident after the first nervousness has passed. And when, at the end of the programme, a number of Columbia executives come out of the wings to greet him, he shakes hands and smiles and laughs and looks very pleased to see them.

There is no audience hysteria for him, but rather a sort of relieved affection, a reassurance that becomes stronger as they watch and listen to him. All the questions that have been asked, all the mystery of his total retreat, are still unanswered. But they are not so important any more, for they are less important than the fact that he is back.

It is more appropriate too, that he should return almost as he started – with Woody Guthrie.

Carolyn Reynolds

BOB DYLAN
John Wesley Harding
CBS

MM, 3 February 1968, page 10

Bob Dylan made his first public appearance since his motor cycle smash in August 1966 at the Woody Guthrie memorial concert last week.

It was in the same month as his accident that CBS records issued his last album, 'Blonde On Blonde', in Britain. Since the issue of that album – nothing. We were reminded of former efforts with 'Bob Dylan's Greatest Hits' but nothing new has been issued.

This month sees the release of his first album since 1966. Titled 'John Wesley Harding', it has been out in America for about a month but a copy found its way to the *MM* office.

The rough edges to his voice are replaced by a strained but smoother vocal

The title track opens side one and is an outlaw ballad very much in the folk vein as is the second number, 'As I Went Out One Morning', although drums and bass prevent them sliding back into the folk bag completely.

'I Dreamed I Saw St Augustine', 'All Along The Watchtower' and 'The Ballad Of Frankie Lee And Judas Priest' are more like the pre-crash Dylan of two or three years ago with the lyrics becoming somewhat more complex.

'Ballad…' has the familiar Dylan spoken narrative. 'Drifter's Escape', the story of a hobo's getaway during what seems to be an act of God, namely a thunderbolt of sorts, is clever story-telling.

The second side opens with 'Dear Landlord' with a strong beat backing and a hint of blues carrying the song along. 'I Am A Lonesome Hobo', is quieter and early Dylan in feeling. 'I Pity The Poor Immigrant', with half its tune taken from the traditional British song 'Come All Ye Tramps And Hawkers' completes a set of three songs that comment on human situations and social predicament.

'The Wicked Messenger' has much more of the deep imagery and meaning of the 'Bringing It All Back Home' era but the last two tracks are particularly interesting. 'Down Along The Cove' is straight 12-bar blues and 'I'll Be Your Baby Tonight', with steel-guitar backing, is definitely country and western in flavour.

Dylan's voice has changed. Gone are the rough edges, replaced by a slightly strained but smoother vocal sound, possibly a result of his accident, but still recognisable as Dylan.

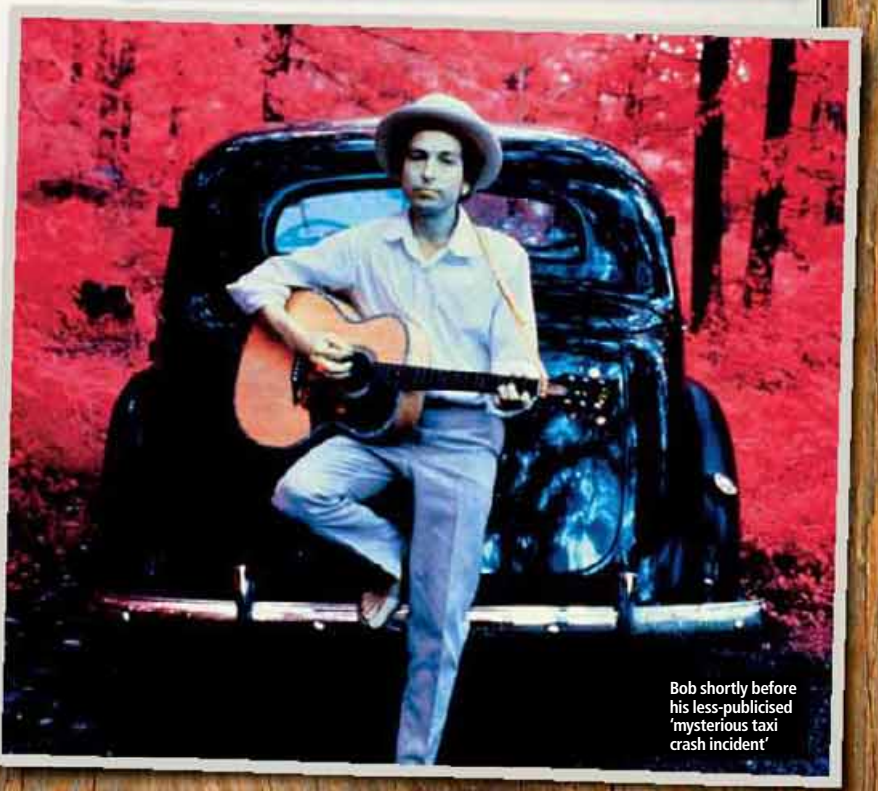
It seems that he has backtracked and the record, despite its new songs, is an appraisal of what he has written in the past applied to what he is writing now.

The new Dylan album is interesting and intriguing, but because of the variety of song-types and styles gives no definite indication as to where he may go next – if he does go anywhere.

The beat group backing is replaced by a simple bass and drums rhythm section with occasional addition of a second guitar to Dylan's own guitar and harmonica playing.

The new Dylan is simplified, unelectric and still one of the best songwriters of the decade.

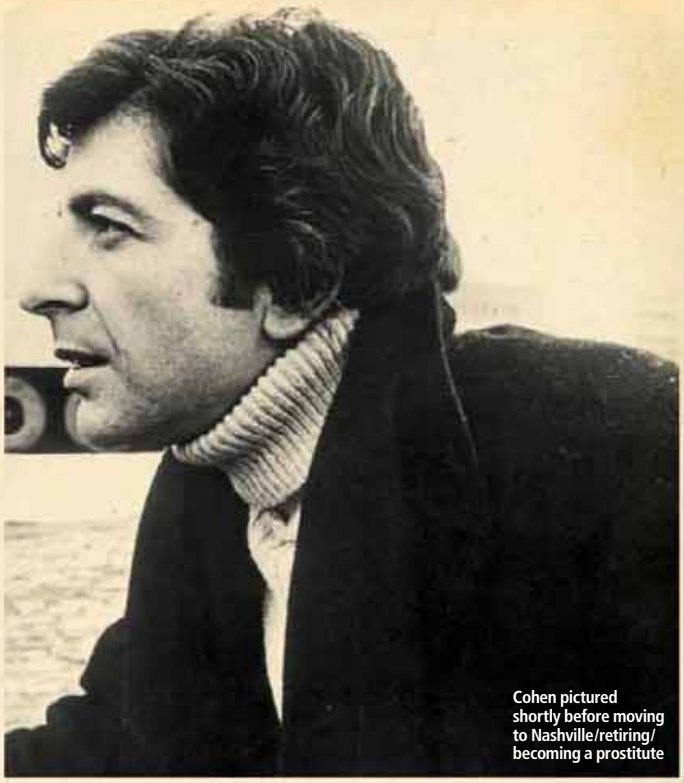
Tony Wilson



Bob shortly before his less-publicised 'mysterious taxi crash incident'

Cohen

Songwriter who got into folk by accident



Cohen pictured shortly before moving to Nashville/retiring/becoming a prostitute

MM, 17 February 1968, page 21

When Leonard Cohen's debut album is issued later this month on CBS, I predict that the talk about him will become deafening. Yet, when I met Cohen in London a short time ago he was talking of giving the whole thing up to go and live on a Greek island. Or he might go to Nashville to write country and western songs. To the best of my knowledge he is in New York at the moment.

"I got into the folk thing by accident," he explained. "I had just finished my novel, *Beautiful Losers*, and I was on my way through New York to Nashville and I was waylaid by the folk scene. I used to play in a barndance group, The Buckskin Boys, back in Montreal.

"While I was writing the novel in Greece I used to listen to the American forces radio, mostly country and western because that's the music I'm closest to. In New York they kept putting me in an intellectual bag but that's not what I'm at. I never thought of myself as a poet with a capital P, I just want to make songs for people because I reckon that they can understand things that I understand. That was why I was so glad to see Noel Harrison get so high in the charts with 'Suzanne'. He got to somewhere like 55 or 56, which is pretty good in America. The ideas in the song may seem a little complex, but it's just the way I see things. We've all learned to accept the fact that we don't necessarily understand every moment of what's happening to us. Well, it's the same with songs.

"I want to write the sort of songs you hear on a car radio. I don't want to achieve any sort of virtuosity. I want to write lyrics that no-one notices but they find themselves singing over a few days later without remembering where they heard them. New York didn't understand what I was trying to do."

If Cohen really means what he says – and he has a habit of using words like religious, God, prostitute, and sin with meanings quite special to himself so it's not always easy to tell if he's putting you on – no-one could accuse him of underestimating his audiences. For his songs are pretty complex things. 'Suzanne' is about a man and woman making love by a river – but it's also about Jesus. 'Dress Rehearsal Rag' and 'Hey, That's No Way To Say Goodbye' are simple enough – aren't they? You begin to wonder if there is some other level to the simple story of a man shaving and looking at himself with a jaundiced eye. Dress rehearsal for what, exactly? This boy raises more questions than he answers.

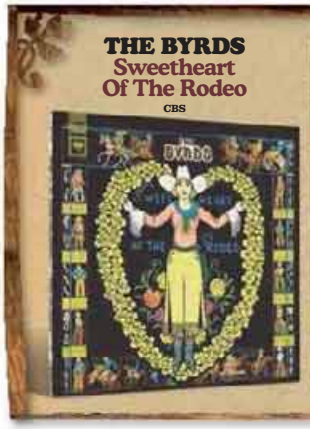
> "I don't have anything against prostituting myself. I think prostitutes are important and valuable"

"This generation understands what I am trying to say," he believes. "It was this generation I was writing for all the time, though I didn't know it. I thought I was writing for my own generation but they thought I was just trying to shock them. The kids today are only interested in the best work you can do. They are really great, in their lives, in the way they love, in style, in taste… great in every way."

Despite all this, Cohen is dissatisfied with what he has achieved so far.

"I've just turned down $15,000-worth of concerts because I didn't want to do them. The presence of money in the whole enterprise has been having a sinister magical effect on me. It meant doing something false to myself. It's not that I have anything against prostituting myself. I think prostitutes are important and valuable. But what use is a prostitute if she can't excite a man?

"Right now I feel like I did when I finished my novel. At the end of the book, I knew I wouldn't write another because I'd put everything I had into that one. I'm still writing songs, but if I find I have nothing else to say that's new I shall probably stop." ***Karl Dallas***

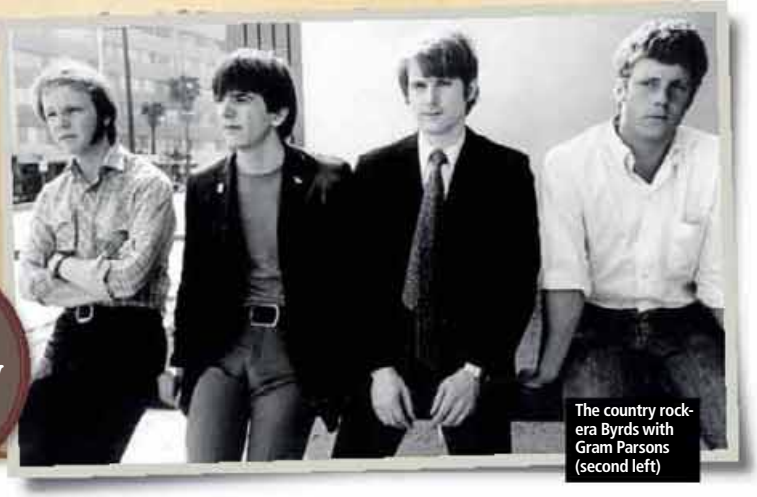


Disc, 12 October 1968, page 16

It's quite a month for country and western fans – at least six new LPs well worth close attention. The Byrds' 'Sweetheart Of The Rodeo' LP shows how wise this great group were to switch completely to the style of music they love and know.

They bring to C&W the same full, big sound they gave rock – and there are some lovely instrumental highlights on such songs as 'One Hundred Years From Now', 'You Ain't Going Nowhere', 'You're Still On My Mind' and 'Nothing Was Delivered'. A stylish album.

The Byrds bring the same full, big sound they brought rock to country & western



The country rock-era Byrds with Gram Parsons (second left)

REDFERNS/CENTRAL PRESS PHOTOS/PICTORIAL PRESS

A refreshed Donovan returns from his 1966 visit to the Maharishi

INDIA INSPIRES DONOVAN TO COMPOSE

NME, 30 March 1966, page 12

Bright little stars become super novas in the course of time, and last Thursday at the Royal Albert Hall, where a full house of 5,000 people had come to listen, Donovan's sun was burning bright. Straight from his long run at the Maharishi's meditation centre he had returned fired with fresh energies to give a perfect concert.

With a host of golden daffodils and purple iris scattered on the stage before him, Don snapped the musical chains of the folk singer once more. He dabbled in jazz with the assistance of brilliant musicians like Harold McNair, who warbles like some inspired song-thrush on a flute behind the simpler ballads like 'The Lullaby Of Spring', and then switches to tenor sax to provide a kaleidoscope of notes to the ode 'To Hampstead Heath'. The mini-big band got right behind the feeling of 'Skip-a-long Sam' and 'Mad Mad John' to provide a touch of swing while 'First There Is A Mountain' brought the calypso touch. Pianist-conductor John Cameron arranged some beautiful classically-inspired passages for the string section, who, dressed in immaculate evening suits and bow ties, looked just a little bemused by the frills, flowers and "bandito" moustaches of their fellows. Donovan brought all back to earth with voice and a lone guitar on 'Epistle To Derroll' and a new song he wrote in India, 'The Boy Who Fell In Love With A Swan'. In the second half of the concert Georgie Fame played organ for jazz singer John Hendricks. Both made surprise appearances and delighted the audience with two rhythm'n'blues numbers.

The first half of the concert consisted of two up-and-coming groups – The Flame, who sang sweet, undiluted contemporary folk music; and the Tyrannosaurus Rex, who made some bold excursions into the realms of Indian music and were notable for some good guitar work from Marc Bolan. But this was Donovan's show and each of his top pops were greeted enthusiastically by this capacity crowd from 'Saffron' and 'Jennifer Juniper' through to the final big band arrangement of 'Mellow Yellow'. Seldom have I heard a huge audience so attentive and silent – how one person was not arrested for blowing his nose during 'The Tinker And The Crab' and disturbing the "peace", I shall never understand!

Those who came to hear cared and went backstage included Hollie Graham Nash, recently returned from a highly successful tour of America. He had a present for Don in the shape of book titled simply *Graphic Work* by MC Escher which contained some incredible surrealistic sketches. Mia Farrow (Mrs Sinatra) sat shyly in one corner and looked so young that she might have been fourteen, with her "urchin-cut", no make-up and an Indian shawl (a souvenir from the Meditation Centre on the Ganges) about her shoulders. John Hendricks bounced through the door with a scotch in his hand and a huge grin on his face. He began to change into his stage suit commenting: "Man, if I saw someone who looked like me –I'd laugh!" Georgie Fame arrived and ran up behind Donovan's manager Ashley Kozak to do an impression of playing a double bass. Ashley turned to discover the joker was the prodigal organist returned from his US tour and affectionately embraced him.

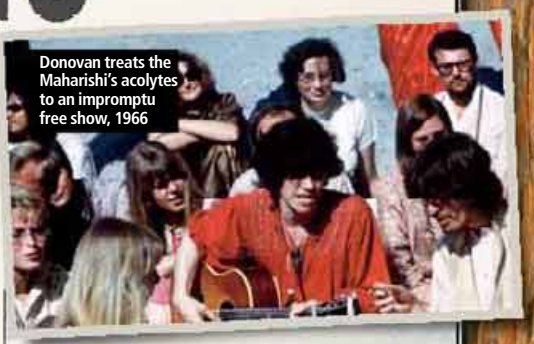
And, of course, Donovan was there, relaxed in a cool white suit, holding a large red-and-yellow guitar which bristled with the spiky ends of new strings and had a cigarette impaled on one. "I'll sing you a song that Paul McCartney wrote while we were out in India," he volunteered and began a pretty tune about *"Army boots, parachutes and sleeping bags for two"*. "Lennon and McCartney got so together out there they must have written at least 27 new songs," Don reported.

How much did it cost Don to stage one of these concerts with all his extra musicians? Ashley jumped in: "The musicians the flowers and all the extra equipment costs us approximately £500 to provide, but it's worth spending this to provide the audience with the best. They give it back to us by their support, like tonight's full house. The expensive packaging on the 'Gift From A Flower To A Garden' album was a gamble but we have already sold over half a million in America alone. We are building for a future and you have to put a lot into it to get a lot out. We all have faith in Don's judgment."

With so many people thinking alike in the pop business at present (Graham Nash, Eric Burdon, Georgie Fame, Paul McCartney, etc) would it not be possible for them all to get together for one huge project? "Perfectly true," said Don. "I think many of us are looking for a stage presentation which will eventually go back to the concept of 'the strolling players', those troupes who entertained with songs, sketches and comedy. I'm sure we will converge some time in the future."

Is Donovan's next single to be 'Hurdy Gurdy Man'? "I think so," Don replied. "It's a nice happy song. It's the story of the world. Whenever there are bad times and we face some terrible crisis, someone like the 'Hurdy Gurdy Man' comes along to make people forget their troubles and be happy. It might be me, The Beatles or the Maharishi. We believe we are heading for a golden age!"

Keith Altham



Donovan treats the Maharishi's acolytes to an impromptu free show, 1966

SINGLE

NME, 17 February 1968, p10

DONOVAN
Jennifer Juniper
Pye

Donovan sings Enid Blyton! A charming and wholly inoffensive little ditty light and fluffy, reflecting the happy side of Don's dream world. Set to an infectious shuffle beat, it's rather like 'There Is A Mountain' – but without the calypso rhythm.

Engaging backing of clavioline guitars, oboes and fat bubbling bassoon. It's so basically simple in both tune and lyric that its appeal is instantaneous. Thoroughly enchanting, it's very easy listening – and yet compelling at the same time. Definitely another hit.

Flip: this is the title theme from the film *Poor Cow* – rather more than the top side with alternative tempos and a deeper thinking lyric.

Derek Johnson

Homeward bound: Actually, heading to Manchester after a *Top Of The Pops* gig

SINGLE

Disc and Music Echo, 6 July 1968, page 19

SIMON & GARFUNKEL
Mrs Robinson
CBS

I have a strange and nice feeling that this is going to be the record to break the Simon & Garfunkel chart silence in Britain. Thank the Lord for it. I am bewildered by the lack of commercial success these two have had when they turn out the most consistently lovely records. Still, here it is! The song they wrote for the film *The Graduate*, done with those beautiful guitars and bongos and their voices which are unspeakably good. The words are splendid, all about "*Jesus loves you*". And after all the hoo-ha the time is very right for an instant hit for these two.
Penny Valentine

Disc and Music Echo, 20 July 1968, page 9

SIMON & GARFUNKEL

Close-up on the quiet giants of music sweeping to the top

"*I prefer boysenberry more than any ordinary jam/I'm a 'Citizens For Boysenberry Jam' fan.*" A line from 'Punky's Dilemma', by Paul Simon, which is no more and no less obscure than anything he's written.

What's it mean? Probably no one knows except the songwriter; at least, many, many admirers own up to not understanding at least 75 per cent of Simon & Garfunkel's songs.

But that is really beside the point; most of the beauty of their songs is that they provoke moods, emotions, atmospheres, call them whatever you will, instantly; it's only AFTER the music has affected you that you start thinking "but what's it MEAN ?"

And by then, it doesn't matter in the least.

An awful lot of people have been talking about Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel for some time. Not surprisingly, because they have featured in the charts both here and in the States for the last couple of years. But it appears that 1968 is THE year of Paul and Artie. Consider the evidence: in last week's *Billboard* US magazine, S&G albums stood at Numbers One, Two, Ten, 25 and 129 in the LP charts – and that's all the albums they've made. Until very recently, their 'Mrs Robinson' single stood right at the top of the Hot 100 singles chart. It seems that a lot of this sudden Simon & Garfunkel mania now sweeping the States is due to a film called *The Graduate*, which features the 'Mrs Robinson' smash and several older Paul Simon songs.

Disc's film reviewer Gavin Petrie raved about *The Graduate* in no uncertain terms: "This must be the film of the year! Everything about the film is perfect, including the sound track music by Paul Simon, which sets the mood rather than relates to the film... Not only worth seeing, a MUST for everyone to see." However, way back in 1966 Paul Simon had THREE records in the chart: Bachelors' 'Sound Of Silence', Seekers' 'Someday One Day' and 'Homeward Bound', sung by himself and Art. It was way back then that they first became large names in the States too. When, surprisingly enough, Paul Simon was in England (which is not so surprising really – for years Paul was an unknown folk-singer at places like London's Troubador and Enterprise clubs and the Edinburgh Folk Festival. In fact he prefers playing here to the States). Paul said: "I was in England when we heard about 'Sound Of Silence' hitting big in the States. We hurried back home as pop stars!"

The influence they have wielded ever since those first hits on the pop scene there and in Britain has been considerable. Bruce Woodley of the late-lamented Seekers wrote songs with Paul; The Hollies, one of Britain's most creative groups, owe a lot to them. "Graham Nash was at quite a few of our sessions. I imagine we influenced The Hollies quite a lot." Paul first came over in the summer of 1964, when he landed a long-forgotten but historically interesting series on the BBC's *Five To Ten* religious programme. Recalls Graham Wood, who used to run a folk club in Essex and knew Paul way back then: "Paul was always very interested in the problems of young people – like the drug addicts."

Whether Simon & Garfunkel can repeat here the incredible success they've suddenly and quite unexpectedly hit in America, is up to the record-buying public, spurred on, one hopes, by that beautiful film *The Graduate*. But really, whether they do or not doesn't matter. Those who love beauty will discover their songs for what they are. And the incredible influence the duo have already had on pop music is something that cannot be denied. ***Hugh Nolan***

SIMON & GARFUNKEL
Bookends
CBS

NME, 13 July 1968, page 10

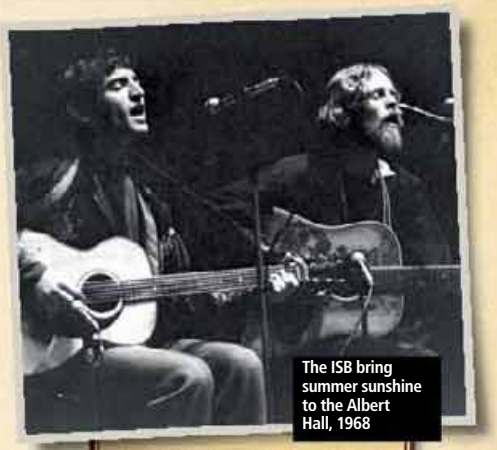
Inspiring, descriptive music behind the forceful singing of Simon & Garfunkel of Paul Simon's songs. Between two versions of 'Bookends', are songs of contemporary America. 'Save The Life Of My Child' is about a boy on a ledge threatening to jump; 'America' is about a trip in a Greyhound bus; 'Overs' is `about a couple who feel they should part, but can't; 'Voices Of Old People', recorded by Art Garfunkel, of the sadness of old age as told in snippets of conversation of old people; 'Old Friends' is about being 70 and sharing the same fears with others of the same age, with wild, confused orchestral music at the end. Side two starts with 'Fakin' It', about someone not really making it; 'Punky's Dilemma' is a light ditty about skittish things; 'Mrs Robinson' is a beat item with a strong Latin flavour and a lyric about a mixed-up woman; 'Hazy Shade Of Winter' is a mood poem about cold days; and 'At The Zoo' is about going to see the animals, to a happy beat. Imaginative and at times confusing to know what the composer is getting at, if anything.
Allen Evans

Imaginative and at times confusing to know what the composer is getting at

REDFERNS/WEYBRIDGE INDUSTRIAL PHOTOGRAPHERS

HIP BUYERS LOVE THIS BAND

Folk music takes an unexpectedly magical turn with the rise of Scotland's anarchic stars



The ISB bring summer sunshine to the Albert Hall, 1968

NME, 8 June 1968, page 14

Say Incredible String Band to Britain's more hip record buyers and you will have said the first and last word on what popular music is all about.

The sad thing is that if you said the same to thousands of others they'd just stare back bewildered. That is a situation which cries out to be rectified, for the Incredible String Band is the most potent, unique and dynamic force to brighten our dull existence for a long, long while.

The Incredibles are two young Scots: Robin Williamson, who is tall, golden-haired, bearded and how you'd imagine the Disciples to have looked, and Mike Heron, who's smaller, dark-haired and looks like someone Shakespeare might have created for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Each plays a wide variety of instruments: Robin, the oud, mandolin, whistle, guitar, flute, violin, pan pipe, water harp, gimbri, Jew's harp, chenai and African drums; Mike the guitar, sitar, harmonica, Hammond organ harpsichord and hammer dulcimer. The beginnings of this Incredible twosome can be traced back to a duo called Robin & Clive, Robin Williamson and Clive Palmer, who had been working the Scottish folk club scene specialising in American country music. In autumn 1965 they were joined by Mike Heron and the three began doing more blues and jug band material, and by the spring of 1966 were adding songs which Mike and Robin had started writing.

In June that year they made their first LP, consisting mainly of original material by Mike and Robin. Later still in 1966 Clive Palmer left to go to Afghanistan and the two who were left began operating under the name the Incredible String Band. Joe Boyd, who had signed them to Elektra Records, became their manager and in early 1967 they made several tours of English folk clubs, adding a countrywide following to their already strong support in the Glasgow area.

The Incredible String Band's lyrics are primarily anti-urban and mainly pleas for a reawakening to nature

Clever the twine: A small selection of ISB's sonic arsenal

By the release of their second album, '5,000 Spirits Or The Layers Of The Onion', their audience had grown tremendously and many more followers were added by the appearance of the LP in the *NME* Albums Chart.

But it was their third and current LP, 'The Hangman's Beautiful Daughter', that has proved their greatest success, being now in its tenth week in the *NME* Chart – a considerable feat for a group which has never received major exposure or had singles success.

The Incredibles' attraction lies in the delicate musical patterns they weave with their vast range of instruments, the meandering vocals which border on musical anarchy and the lyrics that are primarily anti-urban and mainly pleas for a reawakening to nature.

To hear them is to enter a different world, a world of magic and beauty, and a different age, that of a medieval naivety, and the effect of switching from them to something like 'Simon Says' is to discover an ugly pylon amid a beautiful landscape. Meanwhile the good news is that Mike and Robin have already cut their next album for release sometime this autumn.

Nick Logan

INCREDIBLE NIGHT

NME, 6 July 1968, page 16

There are those who believe the Incredible String Band capable of absolutely anything and the fact that the weather performed a sudden transition from rain to blazing sunshine on Saturday for their "A Summer Evening With..." concert at the Albert Hall will probably encourage them to credit Robin Williamson and Mike Heron with that as well. But if you are skeptical of their power over the elements – and it is best to approach with feet firmly on the ground – their power to rise above the traditional confines of music is beyond doubt. Theirs is the most original music development happening today and to watch them is to be in at the formations of extraordinary talent (Brian Epstein hearing the early Beatles must have experienced a similar excitement).

To watch them is to be in at the formations of extraordinary talent

Robin is the more in the clouds, his lyrics and melodies more complex and meandering than those of his partner. Mike is more earthbound, the more immediately acceptable and the more powerful and wide-ranging vocally. If Robin is the kite borne by a breeze, Mike is the anchor – the thread in between binding and feeding both ways.

Highlights were Mike's 'Swift As The Wind' and 'Mercy I Cry City' with Robin accompanying on mouth organ, flute and drums (often playing two at once), Heron's powerful masterpiece 'A Very Cellular Song', and a new instrumental called 'Drum Tune' which had Mike joined by Keith De Groot, Mike McInnerney and a girl called Licorice while Robin whooped about in a kind of fertility dance. ***Nick Logan***

BYRD GRAM SAYS NO TO SOUTH AFRICA

MM, 20 July 1968, page 10

The Byrds began a tour of South Africa last week – without 22-year-old organ and guitar player Gram Parsons.

Explaining his decision, which means Gram is now an ex-Byrd, he said, "I first heard about the South African tour two months ago. I knew right off that I didn't want to go. I stood firmly on my conviction.

"The Byrds are a very professional group and they thought it very unprofessional of me not to do it. I thought it was short-sighted saying it was confirmed without finding out about the South African situation first. It was just two conflicting opinions."

How much did Gram know about South Africa's racial policies? "I knew very little about South Africa before the tour was mentioned," replied Gram. "I knew there was a problem but I didn't know what it was based on. I talked to people who had been born there and I found out."

Gram himself was born in Georgia, another place that has its race problems. He said, "I won't go back there except to see friends. I have a lot of good friends in the South – and they're not all white."

Continued Gram, "I think the South is where you find the good, simple people concerned with the elements, the rain and the wind. In the mountain regions there are people who still speak in an Elizabethan accent and it's from there that I extract some of my music. And it's where rhythm and blues come from."

Gram will now lead his own group. "The group's already formed although I can't say too much about it. We plan to come over in about two weeks. The group is basically a Southern soul group playing country and gospel oriented music, with a steel guitar."

The Byrds played their last gig with Gram as a member at the Royal Albert Hall last week. Already there were signs of a rift when Roger McGuinn and Chris Hillman chatted to *Melody Maker* at the concert. They refused to be drawn on the split in the group and reckoned to get it sorted out after their South African visit.

However they were more forthcoming on their musical directions. Said Roger, "We were kind of astonished when our album 'The Notorious Byrd Brothers' was a hit in Britain. We had sort of given Britain up after 'Turn! Turn! Turn!'"

"I think our first tour was destructive to our British reception," said Chris. "But I think we've corrected that the last couple of times we've been here."

The Byrds were in the vanguard of the West Coast scene yet they do not relate themselves particularly to what is happening on the West Coast. "We're nothing like the newer San Francisco or LA groups," said Chris. "I don't think you can put us into any particular category."

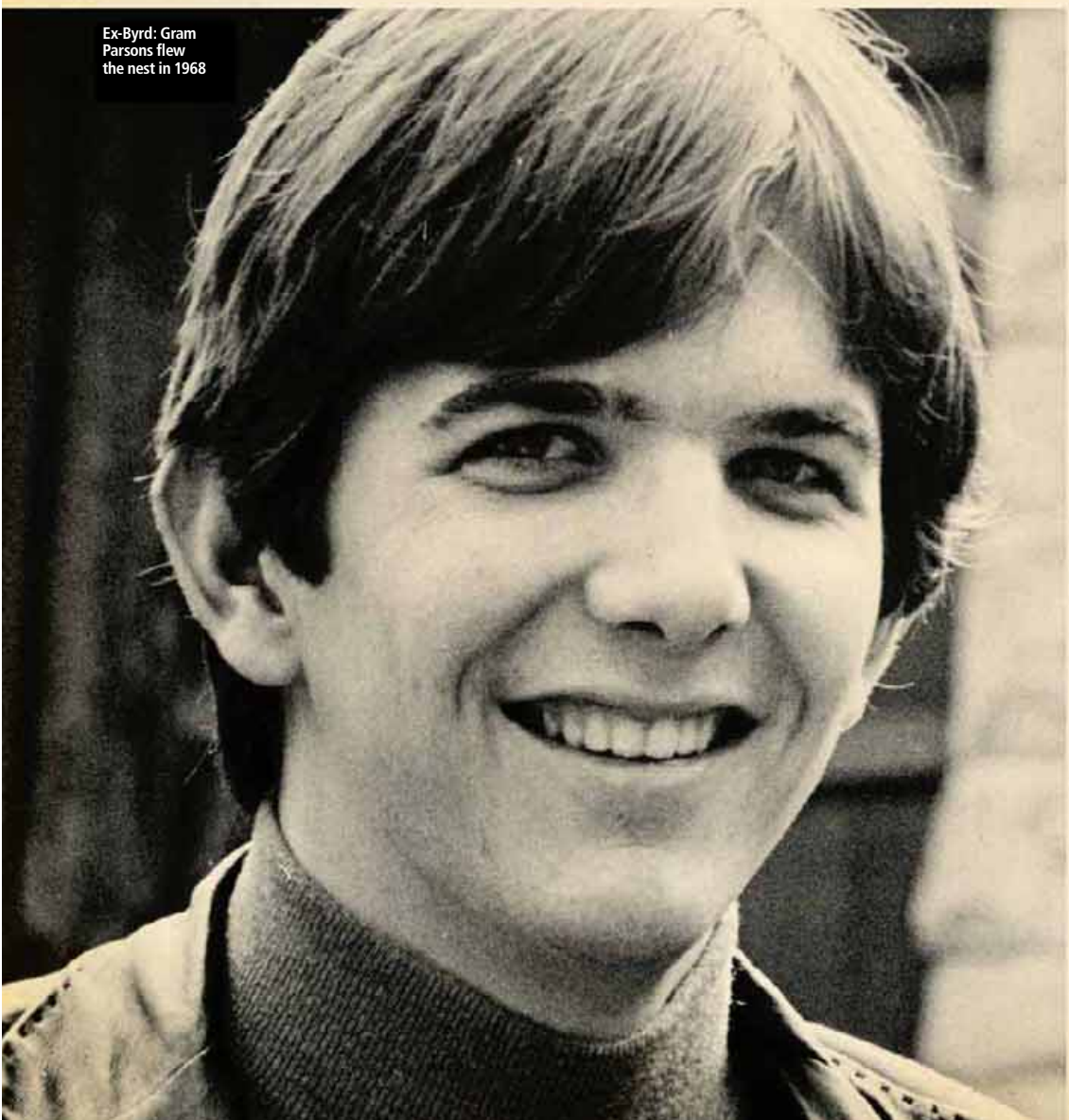
If the group are influenced by any sound at the moment, it is the country and western music emanating from Nashville. The two Byrds agreed that they had become country and western based, although it is not the stereotyped nasal twangings that pour out of the Nashville studios. "You've got to move around," explained Roger. "You have to keep moving or you're a sitting duck."

Roger predicted that country music would be the next big thing. "You can notice what Bob Dylan is doing. And look at the success of artists who have gotten into a country bag – Bobby Goldsboro for example, who wasn't doing country stuff before. Buffy Sainte-Marie is doing country songs."

But country music won't last long either, said Chris. "It'll be more of a novelty. I have a suspicion that electronic and space music will be really big by 1970, because that's when we're supposed to have a man in the moon." ***Tony Wilson and Wina Golden***

> **"The Byrds are a very professional group and they thought it very unprofessional of me not to do it" Gram Parsons**

Gram Parsons (left) discusses Apartheid with The Byrds in London, 1968



Ex-Byrd: Gram Parsons flew the nest in 1968

REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

Jim Webb (left) and Richard Harris talk about flower arrangements, 1968

RICHARD HARRIS TALKS ABOUT JIM WEBB

The lad from Limerick talks about the latest happenings in 'MacArthur Park' to Keith Altham

NME, 13 July 1968, page 2

Richard Harris is one of those admirable Irishmen who conceals a deeper sensitivity under a fine sense of the absurd and couples that with a rare lust for life which compensates for that Final Irish Solution – a good punch in the gob!

Here at last is a 'man' to compensate for some of the callow youths at present attempting to emulate the gods of yesteryear and here at last is someone singing songs worth listening to with ear, heart and mind.

I phoned the lad from Limerick last week in Pennsylvania shortly before he was due on the film set with Sean Connery. He is highly delighted with his new found status as a pop singer.

"It's incredibly unbelievable! I'm loving every minute of it," said Richard. "I'm keeping a very careful eye on it in the English charts. Hang on a minute while I turn down the record player!"

There has been a tendency among some few to underestimate Harris' contribution to 'MacArthur Park' in the light of the tremendous musical talent of Jim Webb, but they would do well to pay closer attention to this actor's interpretation of the lyric. He moves inside the sympathy of the words and extracts the last ounce of feeling from the song with his fine phrasing and enunciation.

"I heard Jim Webb's work about 18 months ago in America." revealed Richard. "At that time he was

> Here, at last, is a 'man' singing songs worth listening to with ear, heart and mind

writing some things for Johnny Rivers, which frankly I thought were brilliant but badly recorded. He had nowhere to stay so I gave him my house on Malibu beach and installed a harpsichord for him to work on. He did a charity show for me down there and I got him to agree to working on an album with me.

"The album is 'A Tramp Shining' *(from which 'MacArthur Park' has been taken)*, it cost approximately $90,000 to produce and at first no record company would touch us! We went to Sinatra's Reprise label and they said it was too expensive. We went to Columbia and they were scared and wanted to know who the hell Jim Webb was. I told them, 'You'll find out in a year's time when he's the next biggest thing to The Beatles.'"

And so it was that eventually RCA picked up the explosive Webb-spun magic and the album, which was produced with scores of American musicians in LA and was finally rounded off when Richard put the vocal tracks on in a London recording studio over Christmas.

"A lot of the work on 'MacArthur Park' was completed by Jim in England," said Richard. "I rented AA Milne's old cottage in the country for him. He was very good about the vocals and let me work my own interpretations. Someone asked him why he only wrote sad songs and he said, 'I can only write sad songs and Richard can only sing sad songs.' That's about it!"

I asked him how the fans were reconciling his hard drinking, hard living, tearaway image exemplified on *The Eamonn Andrews Show* here, with the more sensitive impression given by his hit record?

"I think that the youngsters who have seen me in *Camelot* have been reconciled to a more peaceful image," said Richard. "They relate the character of Arthur and his crusades to the singing message."

On the cover of his album, 'A Tramp Shining' Richard Harris is depicted as having more hair below his ears than above his eyebrows, a prominent nose – which we may more courteously refer to as "noble" – deep laughter lines about the eyes and the kind of well used face which looks as though someone might have ridden a bike over it. And yet how pleased I am to hear him and his well worn voice singing songs of truth.

The new-look countrified Byrds as pictured in September 1968

WHY THE BYRDS DROPPED ROCK'N'ROLL

Disc and Music Echo, 5 October 1968, page 12

It seems difficult to believe that the Byrds have been around for only three years. If anyone ever writes a manual on "How To Survive In Rock'N'Roll Despite All Odds," that person should be Roger McGuinn, with Chris Hillman writing the introduction. Since that first 12-string guitar opening on 'Mr Tambourine Man', Roger has seen Gene Clark, Michael Clarke, Gene Clark again, Kevin Kelly, and Gram Parsons come and go; The Byrds have been five, four, three, four, five, and four; The Byrds have been folk, rock, bluegrass, electronic, country. And it has always, somehow, "worked out all right."

Last week I interviewed The Byrds for the first time in over a year. Roger and Chris had changed, of course, and the others were entirely new to me. The only thing that remained the same, essentially, was their presence, that "thing" they have which has always filled me with no little awe, an intelligent and alert thing, a self-confidence that has weathered many

The only thing which remains the same about The Byrds is their presence

storms and still holds steady. Young girls no longer follow them about the country and yet their magic is still intact, they still elicit volumes of appreciation and nostalgia when they perform. "We always had a country thing going, but only sort of half-baked; we just used country influences. Then we ran into Gram Parsons and he started us in that direction," Roger explained.

"He just happened to come along at that time, when we were ready," amended Chris Hillman. "So we decided to do a country album, that's all."

"We anticipated a negative reaction to country, but we're overwhelmed," added Roger. "The album is selling like hotcakes. The country market is open-minded enough to accept us; we did Grand Ole Opry, and for about the first five minutes that audience wasn't ready to accept us, but when they saw we were doing straight country, they started digging it."

"I suppose people are just tired of what they've been hearing," Chris said, "and country sounds different to most young people."

"Psychedelic music was a good, interesting thing at first, but now there are just too many musicians playing 15-minute guitar solos in the key of E," smiled Roger. ***Judy Sims***

Joni
the seagull from Saskatoon

MM, 28 September 1968, page 26

Talking to Joni Mitchell about her songs is rather like talking to someone you just met about the most intimate secrets of her life. Like peeping in a window on someone and then discussing with her what you have seen. Her songs are so personal. They're honest, too. The girl in the songs on her Reprise album, 'Song To A Seagull', isn't all sweetness and light, and she doesn't seem to win the whole-hearted approval of the writer, herself.

"*Her heart is full and hollow like a cactus tree while she's so busy being nice*," she sings, in a full round voice that has a lot of Judy Collins in it – which is interesting, since Judy has recorded two of her songs and is putting more on her next album.

"I've always admired Judy ever since I first started singing in Saskatoon, Canada, where I come from. Now we are close friends. But in those days I think I sounded more like Joan Baez. Since I started writing songs, the range of my voice has extended downwards something like two octaves, which gives me a lot more freedom in the melodies I'm writing."

She certainly uses that freedom with long, free-ranging tunes that swoop down and soar up in ways that few singers except perhaps Mesdames Baez and Collins could handle. In this they are unlike the deadpan, almost banal melodies used by her fellow Canadian, Leonard Cohen.

"My lyrics are influenced by Leonard," she admits. "We never knew each other in Canada, but after we met at Newport last year we saw a lot of each other. My song 'Marcie' has a lot of him in it, and some of Leonard's religious imagery, which comes from being a Jew in a predominantly Catholic part of Canada, seems to have rubbed off on me, too."

"How can I sing '*Night in the city looks pretty to me*' with people being beaten up by the police?" – Joni Mitchell

'Marcie' is about a girl waiting for a letter that never comes, who walks out of the last verse to go west again. Is Marcie Joni? "I suppose so, really. Marcie is a real girl, she lives in London. I used her name because I wanted a two-syllable name. But I'm the girl in all these songs. And the first song in the album, 'I Had A King', is about the break-up of my marriage."

Joni is not doing too much writing at the moment. "I'm too hung up about what's going on in America politically. I keep thinking, how can I sing '*Night in the city looks pretty to me*', when I know it's not pretty at all, with people living in slums and being beaten up by the police?

"It was what happened in Chicago during the Democratic Convention that really got me thinking. All those kids being clubbed. If I'd been wearing these Levi's, they'd have clubbed me, not for doing anything but because this is the uniform of the enemy. That's what they are beginning to call the kids today, the enemy."

Karl Dallas

Love and Haight: Joni Mitchell dodges the peelers in San Fracisco, 1968

IN THE PINK

As they prepare to release their first proper album as a group, The Band want to drop the Dylan tag and stand on their own ten feet

MM, 12 October 1968, page 19

They are known simply as The Band, although at one time they almost became The Crackers. Their publicity picture makes them look like a bunch of the McCoys back from a successful skirmish with the Martins. They hit the *MM* Chart recently with a song called 'The Weight', written by lead guitarist Robbie Robertson, and backed with Bob Dylan's 'I Shall Be Released', both tracks coming from their album, titled 'Music From Big Pink'. The album cover sports a painting by Bob Dylan.

Robertson, together with drummer Levon Helm, pianist and vocalist, Richard Manuel, organist Garth Hudson and Rick Danko, who plays guitar, fiddle and mandolin, lives at Big Pink. Big Pink is a 125 dollar-a-month ranch-style house in Woodstock not far from Dylan's home. It was in the basement of Big Pink that The Band, once Dylan's backing group, improvised a recording studio. Dylan would come over and together they would work out tunes ranging from folksongs to spontaneous creations.

The group have been together almost nine years and once backed a singer called Rompin' Ronnie Hawkins. They were known as The Hawks. The name of The Band wasn't meant to be any sort of status name because they worked with Dylan. "For one thing there aren't many bands around Woodstock. Friends and neighbours just call us 'the band' and that's the way we think of ourselves." The Band are much travelled and have long musical backgrounds of rock, country and folk. Says drummer Helm, "We had never heard of Bob Dylan, but he had heard of us." The boys, having quit working with Rompin' Ronnie, were working at a coastal resort, Sommers Point, New Jersey, in 1965 when Dylan phoned.

The Band were working at a coastal resort in New Jersey when Dylan phoned

"He said, 'You wanna play the Hollywood Bowl?'," recalls Helm, "So we asked him who else was on the show. 'Just us' he said." On the '...Big Pink' album there is certainly a Dylanesque feel to the music and it has been said that Dylan himself is heard on harmonica.

"There is music from Bob's house and there is music from our house. The two houses sure are different," points out Robbie, once described by Dylan as "the only mathematical guitar genius I've ever run into who does not offend my intestinal nervousness with his rear guard sound." Inevitably The Band will be identified strongly with Dylan, but although influence is there, they stand firmly on their own ten feet.

BARON WOLMAN/RETNA/BRUCE MCBROOM/ELLIOT LANDY–REDFERNS

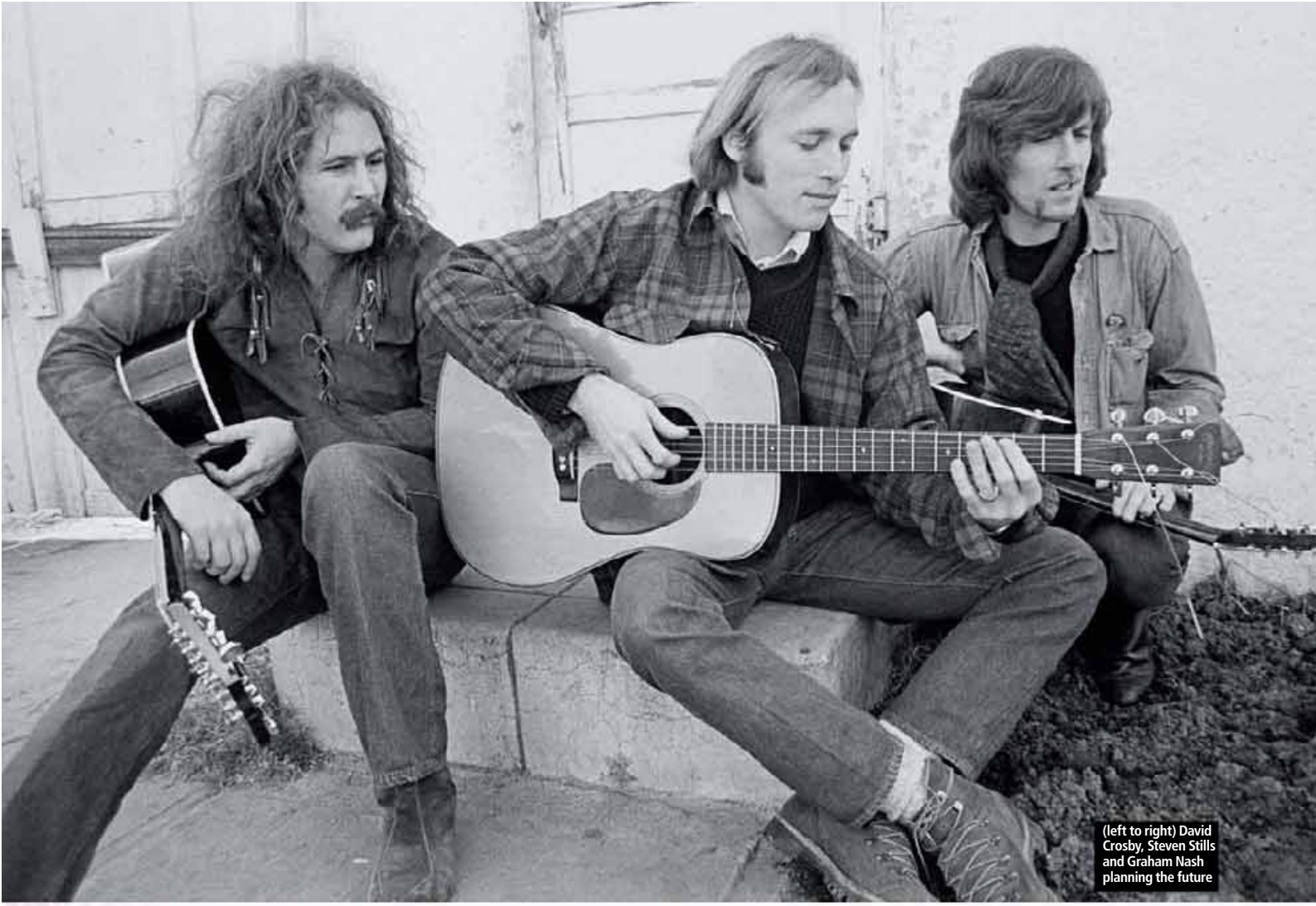
The Band photographed en route to an Amish fancy dress party

THE BAND
Music From Big Pink
Capitol

Disc and Music Echo, 9 November 1968, page 15

We used to think no one sings Dylan better than Dylan; The Band have been so involved with Dylan's music that it just sounds like another side of the man himself. They don't do Dylan any better – they merely add another, very interesting dimension. 'Music From Big Pink' is not a brash, ostentatious tour de force – it is ultra-held back, restrained and so cool. The record doesn't walk off the turntable and sock it to you, you just gradually realise that this is one of the best albums, music-wise, you ever heard. Piano and organ together – shades of Procol Harum – give a fine, full, rich sound; bass and drums are unbelievably tight and exciting and the guitarist is something of a genius. The feel of the whole album is one of controlled magnificence. All the Dylan tracks are super –once you've heard them three times you won't forget them. And The Band's version of 'Wheels On Fire' is quite different and quite excellent. The Band's own songs are also outstanding; particularly 'Mission', 'Lonesome Suzie' and the powerful 'Long Black Veil'. Most would be single hits if released as such – each song is more or less perfect. With the added bonus of a pretty little cover painting by Bob the bard himself (but naughty EMI for printing things all over it) this album should be missed by no one. Powerful, superb, controlled – but heavy rock'n'roll all the way.

Powerful, superb, heavy rock'n'roll



(left to right) David Crosby, Steven Stills and Graham Nash planning the future

IT'S A REVOLUTION

Disc and Music Echo, 7 December 1968, page 18

In a small top-floor flat off Bayswater, London, a music revolution is taking place.

It is being pioneered by Graham Nash (ex-Hollies) David Crosby (ex-Byrds), and Steven Stills (ex-Buffalo Springfield), and it is the answer to all the questions about what is going to happen to pop music in the next year and all the years to come.

It means the end of the group scene as we know it today.

I spent three hours in Graham, David and Steven's company this week, and I came away from that flat more excited and elated than by anything I've heard, seen or talked about in the music scene since I first saw The Beatles.

It is hard not to sound pretentious about something as big, involved and thrilling as what these three boys are planning and are already immersed in. It is hard because what they are doing is to finally point pop music in a strong straight direction. Their decision is the answer to why Eric Clapton has left the Cream, why Jeff Beck left The Yardbirds, why Traffic, Janis Joplin, Mama Cass, Lovin' Spoonful, and the famous Paul Butterfield Blues Band all split up, and why groups in America and Britain are moving away from each other every week.

What they plan is to collect together and tie up all the loose strings of musical talent in the pop world. It is a gradual process already in motion and, finally, it may involve Clapton, Hendrix, Mama Cass and all the "heavy" musicians in the world today.

"Frank Zappa," says Steven Stills, "had this idea of getting all the good musicians under one roof and then let people come and choose who they wanted to put together to play for the people – like one big orchestra."

"We're going to make record companies change their ideas. We're not their private property" Graham Nash

"This is our plan," says Graham. "And we'll start by going to America in two weeks' time to just make music together in anyone's front room. Anyone who will give us room space."

Up in those four small rooms, Graham, David and Steven sing and play together day and night.

They are not making pretentious music, they are not trying to shatter our minds – but to clear them. The sounds they make are really beautiful and joyous.

If they have to be classed then I can only say that they lie somewhere in the Simon & Garfunkel/ Buffalo Springfield category and yet are really a whole new personal, gentle, persuasive power.

Graham has become more calm, and yet outwardly elated – falling over his words to convey the genuine joy he feels. David Crosby, whom I first met as an atrociously aggressive member of The Byrds some years ago, has, at his own admission, "grown in status and realisation". Steven Stills is pale and delicate and plays a 30-year-old guitar as though it's part of his body.

They played me five really lovely songs of some 200 they have so far written, from 'Lady Of The Islands' to 'You Don't Have To Cry'.

"It all started over a year ago in Los Angeles," says Graham. "One day David and I wondered what it would be like to blend high-pitch voices like mine and Cass and his and McCartney. Steven came to

HENRY DILTZ–CORBIS/CHRIS WALTER

us around then – unknown to us he'd been sitting thinking roughly the same thing."

"I'd been doing sessions," says Steven, "and getting over being with the Springfield, and I thought of all the people I'd like to work with – like sing with Stevie Winwood, or play bass with foxy Jimi Hendrix – and I suddenly thought: 'Well I'm just going to start making music and see what happens'."

"We're not starting another group," says Graham. "For a start we're all signed to different labels. But we're pioneering. We may come together on a more permanent basis. This is a gamble in a way, but we all knew we had to leave the groups we were with because they wanted to stay safe and warm where they were, and we couldn't.

"We're going to make record companies change their ideas. We're not their private property. There's no reason why they should compete with each other and no reason why people from different companies shouldn't play together if they're happier and making better music not staying in a rut."

Second generation

David Crosby explained that he thought this plan would involve all, what he called, "second generation groups."

"The whole thing is, after the Stones and Beatles – first generation groups – people got together and said 'Hey man, YOU can play bass guitar – and YOU can play drums. And I can sing. And YOU can drive a van? Wow, we've got a group!'

"It wasn't a musical idea and we all got trapped with the press bit, the money bit and the big star build-up. The whole pop scene has moved away from reality – and that reality is MUSIC."

And Steven explains why what they are doing is natural progression from last year's pop music scene. "In America, aside from Beatles and Stones – and I believe the same thing's happening in Britain – concerts don't draw people to come and watch. They put out a big name artist, a middle name artist, a small name artist, a black group, a yellow group and a green group and it doesn't work because there's no one big name act around that can draw people.

Heavy

"The Monterey Pop Festival was a getting together of all the 'heavies' in the world to have a big party and entertain the public. And it worked. A few months ago there was a festival at Newport Beach when 100,000 people turned up. There were no seats – they sat on the ground – and the show made a bomb.

"The people came and paid to listen to a bunch of the finest musicians around making happy sounds because they were enjoying themselves, and this was what the public wanted to hear and become part of."

This then is the answer to one simple question – "what is going to happen to pop music in the '70s?"

David Crosby sums the whole thing up like this:

"I know I couldn't stand up and sing 'Mr Tambourine Man' once more – Graham feels the same with 'Jennifer Eccles'. You ask us where we're going and to tell you the honest truth, we don't know. At the moment we're just making a joyful noise. And it's spreading. Where are all the best musicians – Clapton? Hendrix? It's a big new moving force that's going to be the new music scene.

"It's got to happen. It's already started."

Penny Valentine

PROTESTER PETER HAS TO CENSOR HIS SONGS

NME, 22 February 1969, page 3

Bob Dylan straightened me out
Oscar Brown Jr gave me the importance of a song
The world gives me ammunition
And love gives a reason to carry on
I am your friend

Peter Sarstedt wrote the above notes himself for his new album and after talking to him for a couple of hours I am pretty well sure that he means it. He seems to be a sincere sort of chap and is certainly likeable.

I learned that 'Where Do You Go To' is both typical and untypical of his songs. The content reflects his cynicism and comment, but the tone of the lyrics has been softened.

"I want to protest through my songs," he explained. "This song was written in October, 1966, and I've been singing it since. It's a comment on a society girl, the social structure. You can't knock the class system, but it's such a good subject.

"The songs I do on my records aren't as strongly-worded as they are when I do the folk clubs.

"I write obscene lyrics and it upsets my mother. She says 'Why do you have to write things like that?' and I say that it's just something I feel and I have to do it."

Peter is quite softly-spoken and I often had to lean closer to hear him over the noise of the jukebox. He looks sometimes intense as he explains his opinions and outlooks.

"No," he agreed, "I'm not really happy about having to tone down my lyrics, but I've got to do it at the moment."

Peter is an admirer of Bob Dylan and speaks highly of him.

"There's so much in his songs. Each time you hear them, you see something different in them. That's why he's so good, you never know quite what he's thinking or saying."

Things are getting better for Peter these days, especially now he has a hit on his hands. Times have been a lot worse, however.

"I worked in an office for a year and left because I couldn't take it," he recalled. "I went to the Continent to try and hitchhike round the world, but I couldn't make it. Then I played bass in my brother Ric's group for a year, but left because I couldn't take that, either."

Peter spent some time in Paris busking, but says that it's not the ill-paid way of making a living that some people imagine it to be.

"It's not a case of living on fifteen bob a week," he pointed out. "I sometimes collected six pounds a night in my hat."

Peter sees his career becoming concentrated on albums, not singles, and can't see himself as a pop star. He only listens to the usual pop songs with half an ear and is generally quite happy with his life at present.

"I'm not as bitter as I was," he commented. "I've fallen in love with a woman and when you're in love you become more tolerant. Things don't tend to annoy you as much."

Peter has written hundreds of songs but finds that he has to play for about six hours before he gets the right ideas. He can't sit on a bus or in a cafe and get inspiration, though much of his writing is based on his personal experiences.

With his mound of hair, moustache and college scarf, Peter resembles one of the LSE lot who are never happy unless they're miserable.

On the contrary, he finds life OK and will confine his revolting to his songs (to the constant concern of his mother) but to his satisfaction.

"When they said 'Let's put him on record,' there were lots of songs they could have used," Peter told me. "'Cathedral' didn't quite make it, but I don't feel any difference in me now that this one has.

"Eventually, I'll record the song I want to with the lyrics I want and then I'll be happier."

Richard Green

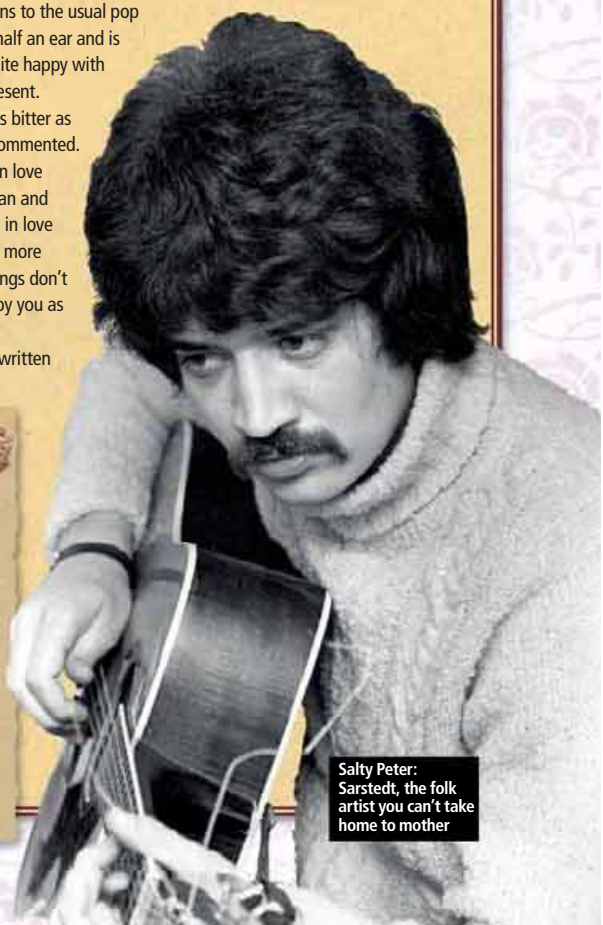
> "I write obscene lyrics and it upsets my mother"
> Peter Sarstedt

SINGLE

NME, 25 January 1969, p6

PETER SARSTEDT
Where Do You Go To
United Artists

He nearly had a hit with 'I Am A Cathedral', and this enchanting and highly descriptive ballad is equally as good. Lilting, with a particularly effective lyric. Self penned.
Derek Johnson



Salty Peter: Sarstedt, the folk artist you can't take home to mother

LEONARD COHEN
Songs From A Room
Columbia

MM, 10 May 1969, page 24

Like his first album, Leonard Cohen's second, 'Songs From A Room', is notable more for the songs than the singing. Cohen has a superb sense of lyrics and this new album makes compelling listening.

The atmosphere throughout is subdued, the songs simply arranged and presented so that the focal point is the word. Cohen, in fact, seems to have taken over from Dylan somewhat in this area of songwriting. Hard to pick out notable tracks as they are all good but 'Story Of Isaac', 'The Old Revolution', 'Bird On A Wire', and 'Lady Midnight' are worth mentioning as tracks to listen for. ***Tony Wilson***

Cohen seems to have taken over from Dylan in this subdued songwriting style

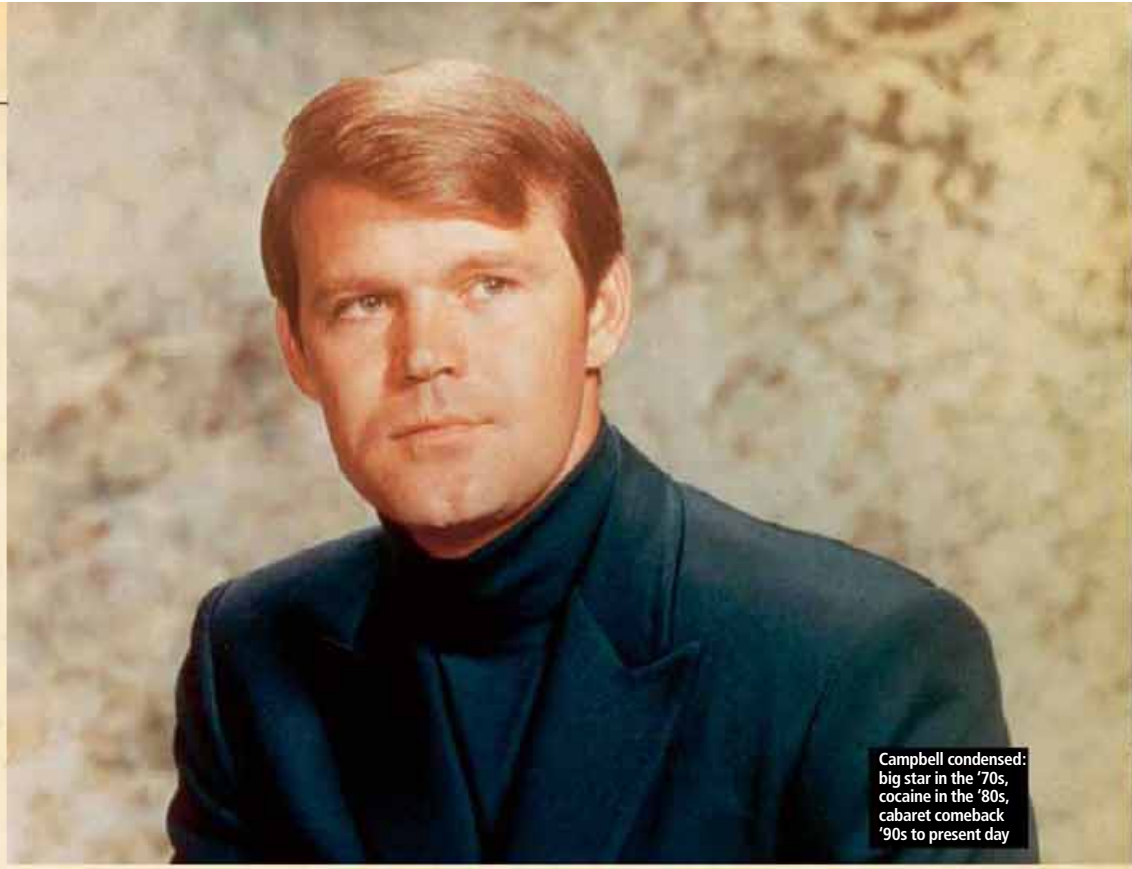
ROY HARPER
Folkjokeopus
Liberty

MM, 10 May 1969, page 24

Harper's third album 'Folkjokeopus' was a long time coming but was worth the wait.

Roy's writing is a kind of pop poetry; satirical, ironic, funny and individual. His sense of lyrics is excellent and can be as clever and imaginative as it can be simple and effective.

On this new album there is included some of his best songs to date. Particularly outstanding are 'McGoohan's Blues' and 'She's The One'. Also included are 'Exercising Some Control', a good example of the Harper wit, 'Manana' and his tribute to San Francisco's famous pot-smoking policeman, 'Sergeant Sunshine', who turned on the steps of the town hall. A very good album by any standards. ***Tony Wilson***



Campbell condensed: big star in the '70s, cocaine in the '80s, cabaret comeback '90s to present day

THE WICHITA LINEMAN IS ON THE LINE

The American singer-guitarist speaks to Alan Walsh from the set of his US television show

MM, 15 March 1969, page 5

Jim Webb's wistful 'Wichita Lineman' has realised an ambition for guitarist-turned-singer Glen Campbell.

"It's always been a hope of mine that I could have a single on the British charts," said Glen from the Los Angeles office of his TV show, *The Glen Campbell Good Time Hour.* "I made it into your chart with 'By The Time I Get To Phoenix', but I'm really very, very pleased that '...Lineman' is in the Top Five."

It's the second winner for the Webb-Campbell combination and Glen is naturally happy to record Webb songs. "In fact, my next American single is another of Jim's songs called 'Galveston', and this will probably be my next British release in due course."

Glen had just arrived for the day's rehearsal at the studios when I phoned him. His *Good Time Hour* has been running since January and is one of the top variety shows on American screens. He's already had people like Stevie Wonder on the show and the show he was working on featured Bobbie Gentry. Glen, in fact, has worked in many different fields of music.

His father, a Scottish Campbell who had emigrated to America, bought him his first guitar when he was four and within two years he was singing and playing guitar on radio shows throughout his home state, Arkansas, Texas and Oklahoma. As a teenager he joined his first country band in Albuquerque, and eventually moved to Hollywood, where he established himself as one of the busiest session guitarists on the West Coast.

Glen recalled those busy days in the studios. "I remember one year I did 586 sessions on guitar," he told me. "I sure was busy then."

He worked with a fantastic variety of artists before John Hartford's 'Gentle On My Mind' established him as a rising vocal star. He recorded a number of songs until '...Phoenix' gave him his first international hit.

"I think British audiences are warmer than American crowds. They appreciate an artist more, I find" Glen Campbell

I asked when British audiences would be likely to see him perform.

"I'd like to come over this year. I like the idea of working for British audiences. I think they are perhaps warmer than American crowds. Apart from the country circuit, audiences here tend to have the attitude, 'OK, then, show us something.'

"I think the English audience, like the country fans here at home, go to see an artist because they want to hear him and without the sort of aggressiveness that you find here. They appreciate an artist more, I find."

ELLIOT LANDY–REDFERNS/REXFEATURES

BOB DYLAN
Nashville Skyline
CBS

NME, 19 April 1969, page 13

Dylan has changed again. His latest album, 'Nashville Skyline', the 14-month-later follow-up to 'John Wesley Harding', presents the folk-rock star in a completely new guise. Vocally, you could be excused for thinking Dylan has started all over again. His voice is unlike the Dylan of old, acoustic, electronic, or otherwise.

More's the surprise, because no inkling of this new phase had leaked out. Dylan is very sensitive about things like that. His new contract with American Columbia (CBS in Britain) firmly stipulated that no advance publicity would be accorded any of his albums.

'Nashville Skyline' consists of ten tracks, nine of which are Dylan originals. If the content of the songs is any indication of the composer's present state of mind, Dylan is carefree and careless. Gone is the bitterness of Dylan's early work, the sharp-edged satire of other albums. The lyrics are straightforward, simple, and (seemingly) honest. Dylan appears to be writing plain, simple songs about plain, simple people. Love predominates.

The instrumentation is likewise simple, but deceptively so. His studio group is tight and probably the best he's ever worked with. It punches out the backings with precision and authority. At 27, married with a son, Dylan seems to have found whatever it was he was searching for. His seven years of writing, singing and the ensuing world idolatry, appears to have gone full circle. In many ways, Bobby Zimmerman, the boy from the boondocks (Hibbing, MN) has brought it all back home. His music is a magical marriage of blues and country.

'Nashville Skyline' seems destined to be Dylan's biggest selling album. Like The Beatles, Dylan has abandoned the leadership quest in pop. He brought together folk and rock and now he seems to be happy just being himself.

Side one opens with a Dylan-Johnny Cash collaboration on his 1963 hit, 'Girl From The North Country'. Each singer offers several verses separately, and then they team up to carry the song to its conclusion. It's an easy-rolling, inoffensive sort of song, which is likely to be issued as a single.

'Nashville Skyline Rag' is an instrumental, country all the way, with acoustic guitars, fiddles and piano. Dylan offers several highlighted harmonica solos, which blends well with the tune's overall light-hearted feel.

But the album is not all country. 'To Be Alone With You' is a funky and mean uptempo blues number, with powerful instrumentation and a swag of Mississippi guitar licks. This is Dylan at his most commercial, and in this context, the most rewarding. 'I Threw It All Away' is simple and to the point. He had the girl and he needed nothing else. But he didn't realise it until too late. A universal theme, and far from new, but in the hands of Dylan, it is refreshingly enjoyable. In the final track on side one, Dylan makes it abundantly clear he'd like to spend the night with 'Peggy Day'. Eminently hummable, and probably the 'Ob-La-Di Ob-La-Da' of 'Nashville Skyline'. The guitars chatter away, a pedal guitar break, and a rousing blues climax.

At 27, married with a son, Dylan seems to have found whatever it was he was searching for

'Lay Lady Lay' makes no pretensions about its meaning, Dylan is infatuated by a girl and he wants her to "*lay across my big, brass bed.*" The song is symbolic of the so-called New Morality, where sexual relations are as inevitable as a bunch of roses or a box of chocolates. Out in the country again on 'One More Night', simply mountain music, with some sharp Nashville guitar picking. Reminders of the Jim Webb style of writing in 'Tell Me That Isn't True', a jumpy, punchy song, with excellent backing. Dylan winds around the melody, extracting the full flavour of sadness. The arrangement is similar to what you'd find on a Cream or Led Zeppelin album. 'Country Pie' is reminiscent of The Beatles as they are now. Humorous lyrics and a heavy-handed pianist.

In brief, this is funky country, a rare music form.

In the final cut, Dylan becomes all schmaltzy, in the rock concept. 'Tonight I'll Be Staying Here With You' is so cute, it isn't difficult to imagine Nancy Sinatra recording it. Again, heavy backing, and Dylan singing in unrecognisable fashion. You can't help but be amazed at the change in his style. That in a nutshell, is what this album is about – change. ***Ritchie Yorke***

"A magical mix of blues and country": Dylan laps up Nashville

Meet the positive MISTER HAVENS

Richie Havens: "I think in terms of every *world*, not everday things"

SINGLE

NME, 28 June 1969, page 6

DONOVAN AND JEFF BECK GROUP
Goo Goo Barabajagal
Pye

Almost everything else this week fades into insignificance against this gem of a record that heralds Donovan's long-awaited return and dispels all fears that his magic was on the wane.
But the importance of the Beck Group's contribution cannot be overstated. It is the group, aided by a superb Mickie Most production, that provides a backing full of fascinating discoveries.
A piano that must be Nicky Hopkins' rampages along behind Donovan's shuffling, almost scat singing and every now and then there's a lick of Beck guitar to be relished. In fact, its most interesting facet is that, because there's so much happening, you'll be picking up something you missed before on every new hearing.
Nick Logan

THE FLYING BURRITO BROTHERS
The Gilded Palace Of Sin
A&M

NME, 24 May 1969, page 11

This is what the accompanying handout describes as "roots music." Or down-home country music as opposed to big-city bash, if you like.
The Burritos are an amalgam of ex-Byrds Gram Parsons and Chris Hillman, joined by steel guitarist Sneaky Pete and bassist Chris Ethridge.
The songs have humour, but mainly a cynicism aimed at life and the people of the big city, 'The Gilded Palace Of Sin' of the title.
'Sin City', for example, warns of the "*slickers in their green mohair suits.*"
A highly recommended LP. Home on the range is certainly where some of today's most provocative music is being made.
Nick Logan

The songs have humour, but mainly a cynicism aimed at big city life

MM, 31 May 1969, page 14

Richie Havens is not just a singer – he is a communicator

Through Richie Havens' music, he asks people to look at themselves, try and understand themselves and then understand those around them.

"Communication is the deciding factor," he says. "The deciding factor as to what can be really good or bad in the world.

"What we've found out is that there is an individual negativism. If it was a mass negativism, we could at least see it and do something about it."

Havens is making his first visit to Britain and on June 5 appears at the Royal Albert Hall. His latest album, 'Richard P Havens, 1983' has recently been released and has received good reviews.

Born in Brooklyn in 1942, he is the eldest son of nine children and his early life was tough, overshadowed by the violence that is the everyday life in the ghettos of New York.

At 14, he organised a gospel group, the McCrea Gospel singers.

Although Richie is not religious in the sense of being a strict practitioner of the Christian religion, he says, "I never doubted that there was a God as long as I can remember.

"There is an order to the way we do things. A lot of people think there is chaos, but it's one force working against another force and it's up to you to know which part of the order you're working for. I think I picked the positive side."

Richie left home at 17 and a succession of jobs – messenger boy, restaurant counterhand, doll factory worker – followed.

He gravitated to Greenwich Village and became involved with the musicians, artists and writers there. By 1962, he began playing guitar and singing and was drawn into the urban folk revival.

"Audiences are just people – that's the way I look at it," he says, "and it's always been like that in the States unless I'm working a strictly college audience." An essential part of his performance anywhere is to feel an empathy with the audience. "I want to get everybody to join in. I know the first couple of songs I'm going to do, then I leave it. I contend that I don't pick the songs – the audience does. I've had people come up to me after a show and have a list with them of songs they had wanted me to do and I've done them all, down the line.

"They've been thinking them down there and I've just done them. So everybody is giving and receiving on that side."

Richie says of the material he does: "Most of them, I think, are part of my philosophy of realisation. My own songs are my communication. The kind of songs I write take time in coming down to a simple text.

"I get an idea then I forget it until it happens again. Then it comes out simple. I think in terms of every *world*, not everyday things."

Richie Havens is still something of an underground performer, particularly in Britain, but he thinks that isn't a bad thing.

"Because of more communication – radio and television – new demands are being created. There are new people we have not heard from yet, but when we do there will be rapid changes in music."

Tony Wilson

JAN PERSSON–REDFERNS/HENRY DILTZ–CORBIS

Well, whatever DID happen to Hollie Graham Nash?

Crosby, Stills & Nash prepare to make a giant leap with new members

Disc and Music Echo, 26 July 1969, page 15

Armstrong, Aldrin and Collins have carved themselves a place in the history books. Their moon adventure marks a giant step in scientific progress.

Crosby, Stills & Nash are poised to receive similar recognition. Only they'll be remembered, I'm certain, for their exploratory journey into pop music.

Nash is a name you will recall as the ex-Hollie who quit last autumn because he felt his work had outgrown the group. He disappeared into hiding to think and help plan the revolution which is about to take place.

Crosby, David, late of The Byrds, is the stocky, moustachioed elder statesman of American rock, who plays lovely electric 12-string and wails with a tender voice.

And Stills, Stephen, late of Buffalo Springfield and guest guitarist on almost everyone's album, is – although he doesn't shout about it – in the same class as Clapton or Hendrix, but without the ostentation of either.

Together they have been moulded into one of the new, lesser-advertised "supergroups". Based in the States – where they have still to make their live debut – this group is gradually pointing pop music in a new direction which will both astound and amaze.

It started really in December 1968 when this ultra-talented threesome described themselves in *Disc* as a "second generation" group. Star musicians who get together, find they have much in common musically, and start to sing, write and play exactly as they feel.

It wasn't, claimed Graham Nash, just a new group. The pop scene was moving away from reality – and that reality was the music. The three of them were pioneers. Blazing a new, previously unexplored path in pop music.

Now, a terrific album and single (the tremendously commercial Nash track 'Marrakesh Express') are about to be unleashed on the listening world, and both – like the lunar probe – are part of an enthralling revolution.

Much mystery and intrigue has surrounded Crosby, Stills & Nash over the months they have worked untiringly together in the hills above Los Angeles. Their return to pop music has been awaited with bated breath.

(l-r) Dallas Taylor, Graham Nash, David Crosby, Stephen Stills, Neil Young, Greg Reeves

"This LP is really just the beginning. Just scratching the surface" Stephen Stills

"This 'supergroup' tag has been putting a lot of pressure on us," admitted Steve Stills when I rang his home last weekend. "It's like putting $50,000 on a 10-1 horse. The minute we walk onstage we know everyone will expect us to *be* a 'supergroup'. It's hard to comprehend.

"And we've had hang-ups all the way so far. So the longer it goes on like this the more nervous we become. All we can do in the end is just shrug our shoulders and do what we do!"

Crosby, Stills & Nash have now added Neil Young, another Buffalo Springfield man, and 19-year-old Motown bassman Greg Reedes, to join resident drummer Dallas Taylor.

Steve laughed: "I suppose we'll now call ourselves Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young. And while we were originally 'second generation', we've now become virtually 'third generation'. And it will probably progress still further!"

But what of Graham, rechristened "Willie" by the others? He seems as much of a driving force in this formidable new line-up as anyone. He now lives in a beautiful home over the hill from Steve. His life is quiet contentment. He has, at last, found himself.

"He's very happy and kinda relaxed now," reported Steve. "But I think he's getting homesick. And the rest of us are beginning to get curious about England, too. I guess we'll spend a month or two with you soon. I get incredibly good feelings when I'm over."

Crosby, Stills & Nash, lately augmented by the new blood, have been working virtually non-stop since they merged their musical genius and genuine enthusiasm more than a year ago.

Background (all hail from widely different homes) and any difference of personality make some things more enjoyable, says Steve. "All our influences are being fused together as a result.

"Willie is the same – but different. A man when 22 is one guy. And at 28 he's another. But really he's still the same guy," he continued. "Now he's really my brother. We're all brothers!"

On their album all three have contributed individual material and sung the songs their own way. The whole thing is a product of deep friendship, definite genius, love and loyalty.

Says Steve: "That LP is really just the beginning. Just scratching the surface. The first glimmerings of what's going to come."

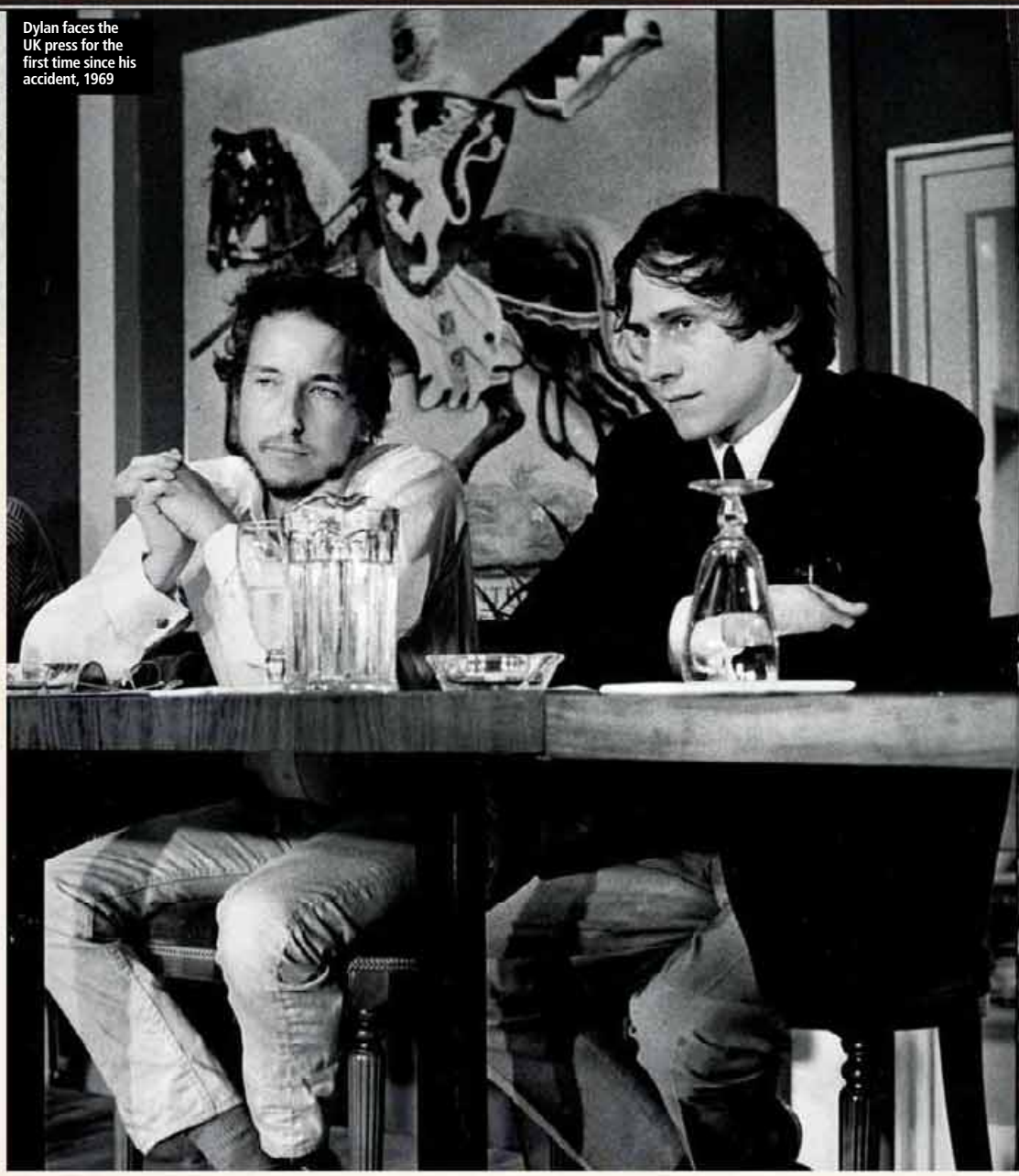
Mike Ledgerwood

CROSBY, STILLS & NASH
Crosby, Stills & Nash
Atlantic

MM, 9 August 1969, page 15

The strength of this trio lies in the fact that Messrs Stills, Crosby and Nash are all excellent songwriters, particularly strong on melody. Add to the fact that all have good voices which complement each other just right and you have a strong set-up. This is a delightful album of original songs, including their current hit, 'Marrakesh Express'. All apart from the haunting 'Wooden Ships' and biting 'Long Time Gone' are lyrical love songs. The line-up has Stills on lead guitar, organ and bass, Crosby on rhythm guitar and Dallas Taylor on drums. Nash's falsetto harmonies sound much less strained than on his work with The Hollies.
Bob Dawbarn

All have good voices and complement each other just right



Dylan faces the UK press for the first time since his accident, 1969

NME, 30 August 1969, page 3

DYLAN TALKS TO NME

But he remains characteristically enigmatic

"I want to see the home of Alfred, Lord Tennyson." That is the reason Bob Dylan gave at his Isle Of Wight press conference on Wednesday for coming to Britain. Beyond that, he would not elaborate, but he did say that the songs he will perform at the festival on Sunday might be, "things you'll have heard before but with new arrangements."

Dylan, looking a lot like Fidel Castro with his short beard and hairstyle, and continually tapping his sunglasses on his right knee, told me he had last appeared in St Louis a month ago. Asked about a report that The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, Blind Faith and the Bee Gees wanted to jam with him, he smiled and replied: "Great, great!"

Did he think, I asked, he had changed a lot since we last saw him at the Royal Albert Hall. "I believe there's a conscious thing since the accident. I haven't really changed. It had more to do with the show I was doing than anything else. It really had nothing to do with me personally." Does he feel that his days of "protesting" are over? "I don't want to protest any more. I never said I am an angry young man." Then I asked him why the acetates he made with The Band had never been released. Road manager Bert Block broke in and said: 'Those songs were for the publishing company. Dylan and The Band record for different companies." Because of his lack of public appearances I wondered if he liked doing shows. He replied: "The more the better!"

Dylan was looking a lot like Fidel Castro, with his short beard and hairstyle

That was all I could ask in the fifteen minutes I had with him on Wednesday afternoon at the beachside Halland hotel, Sea View, Isle of Wight, where the Stones are staying during the festival. I'm staying here, too, so I should have lots of news for you next week. How did I find Bob Dylan? About the same as in 1965 when I last saw him He's still shy and inclined to be cynical. Perhaps if one could get him alone he might relax. But surrounded by his helpers, it was difficult to communicate freely with him. ***Richard Green***

Festival Flashes

Disc and Music Echo, 6 September 1969, page 8

The Band was a complete knockout in its own right before Dylan came on. A fantastic, driving, sound with beautiful tightness and great rocking drums from Levon Helm. They opened with 'We Can Talk', from their 'Music From Big Pink' LP, which swung like mad, and followed with an hilarious 'Don't You Tell Henry', 'I Shall Be Released', 'The Weight' and 'Loving You Is Sweeter Than Ever'. They look so pleased to be playing, and their sound was intoxicating. Dylan received his fee in full – allegedly £35,000 working out at about £530 a minute – before appearing. And £17 promptly went in Dylan's pre-act drinks bill for himself and his Beatles backstage admirers. Despite assurances to the contrary by the organisers, food prices at the festival site provided much profiteering. One man successfully sold breakfast for 11s 6d to several American visitors; while miniscule plates of curry cost 2s 6d, and in the backstage enclosure inadequate ham sandwiches sold at 2s 6d a round.

Bob and The Band protest the price of the festival's inadequate catering

BOB'S SOUND IT IS A-CHANGIN' — AND HIS MAGIC IS AS GREAT AS EVER

Disc and Music Echo, 6 September 1969, page 9

"He very rarely smiled. He barely spoke to us. But we didn't really care. We had gone to see Bob Dylan's comeback, and that was enough. He's always been serious, and he's never liked small-talk.

On stage, the aloof Dylan comes to life. He has an electric presence and must be the only star who can communicate with a gigantic audience by keeping his mouth closed when he's not singing. That is because he is shy... and anyway, words would be superfluous after one of his songs.

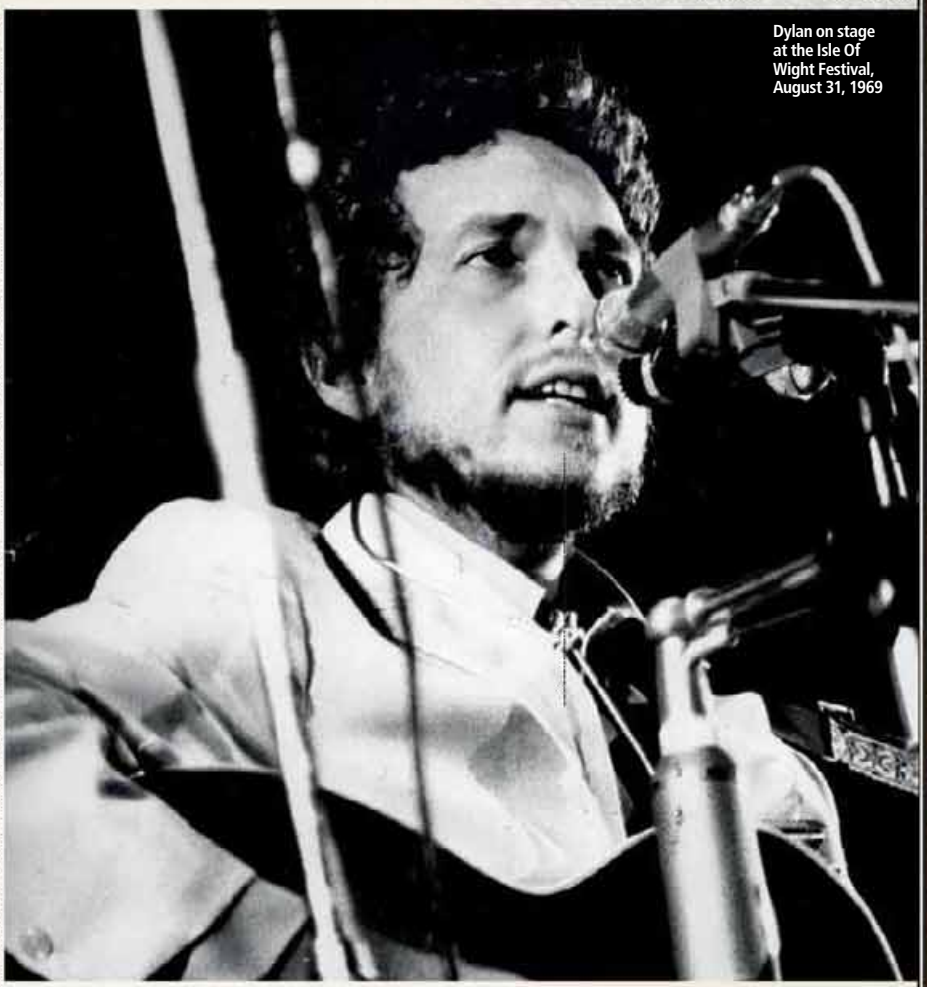
For an hour, Dylan gave us a fairly predictable 17 songs and there were few signs that he enjoyed himself. His face was stern, and if any other singer had changed those sanctified melodies so drastically as he did, it would have been considered sacrilege. But they are his songs, and he can do as he wishes with them. He bent the tunes, glided smoothly over once-tricky parts, twisted the words, so that we could barely recognise some of them. And with the magnificent Band behind him, enjoying the show much more than Bob and playing with brilliant tightness and empathy, old songs took on a completely new sound. There was not one so-called "protest" song. But then, to expect him to perform early epics like 'Masters Of War' or 'Talking World War III Blues' would be rather like asking The Beatles to do 'Please Please Me'. It's an era gone, if not forgotten.

Maybe, like his voice, his attitude has mellowed a little, and he has found contentment in being an entertainer more than a lecturer. His songs mainly lacked contempt or resignation. Instead there seemed a greater accent on happy melody and rocking sessions with The Band. Still it was a night to remember: the maturity of 28-year-old Dylan, six years after It All Began, was simply spellbinding. It is no empty soul who can draw silence from that size of crowd.

He shambled on in white suit and yellow shirt, harmonica harnessed in position, and sang 'She Belongs To Me'. "Sure is great to be here," he said afterwards. Then, nervously: "Thank you very much." 'I Threw It All Away' was taken very slowly. He has a new habit of lifting the guitar to straddle his chest, like a rifle, and it looks rather menacing at times. 'Maggie's Farm' – with The Band chanting the "*no more*" choruses – bore little resemblance to his recorded version. He followed this with some lovely acoustic guitar work on 'Mountain Thyme'. It is often forgotten that Dylan is a more-than-adequate guitarist. He's an inspired, sensitive player.

He gave us different words to 'It Ain't Me Babe', tripping at a rather stilted tempo through the melody. And with 'Ramona', we heard more of the old, aggressive voice. The harsh, rasping voice was replaced by his newer, gentle whine on 'Lay Lady Lay' and 'Mr Tambourine Man'.

The Band gave Bob really superb backing on 'I Dreamed I Saw St Augustine', and on 'Highway 61 Revisited' he seemed for the first time to be relaxing a little and enjoying the music. After 'Pity The Poor Immigrant', he sailed into 'Like A Rolling Stone' – not nearly so clear, incisive or direct as his recorded version – before the cooling off period in his show: 'I'll Be Your Baby Tonight'. For this, he took off his jacket, though it went on again, mysteriously, for the next song. He was obviously too hot with it on, too cold with it off.



Dylan on stage at the Isle Of Wight Festival, August 31, 1969

"This next song was done by the Manfred Mann group, a very good group." Then Bob performed, for the first time I had heard the song by him, 'Mighty Quinn'. Manfreds' hit version is much better, for The Band's sounds submerge Dylan's words and it just becomes a very loud romp. He returned for an encore and 'Rainy Day Women' sounded just great, with the line "*Everybody must get stoned*" rasping out by Bob and The Band with tremendous force, even conviction.

There weren't any new songs, and no "superstar jam session" at the end which we had been led to expect. But Dylan was enough. He looked and sounded nervous,seeking comfort from a little backchat with The Band, and rolling through his repertoire as if he'd just rewritten the tunes and meddled with the words. Perhaps he felt that after a few years some of the songs needed kicking about a bit.

What *IS* the magnetism of Bob Dylan? What is it about his "live" performance that makes an audience feel so exclusive, so favoured, and so plain lucky? There are several factors:

1. He doesn't speak much, so the converted think they are "in" on his secret message, whatever that may be. His followers gather to hear him as if it is Word From Above.

2. He writes unbeatable songs, poetically enthralling, melodically enchanting, loaded with innuendo, withering scorn, mocking hate, love, fun, even beauty.

3. He always leaves a tremendous amount in reserve, so there's an even better song following and you forget the climax reached a few moments earlier. And you firmly believe he's singing just for you, all night.

4. He never outstays his welcome, but leaves his audience not just hungry, but starved. So we go away waiting for the next meal, back home to play his records and confirm what we've just heard: that's he's unique.

The beauty of Dylan "live," on stage, making his music, is that he radiates an almost mystical warmth as he stands there, a lean, wiry figure looking uncertain, even amateur. At the Isle Of Wight on Sunday, he was classless yet classy. If anyone went away from this frail giant's concert wondering what all the fuss was about, it's no good trying to explain. His show is sheer magic, his talent titanic. ***Ray Coleman***

The Band played with brilliant tightness and empathy, and Dylan's old songs took on a completely new sound

PRESS ASSOCIATION/ROBERT ELLIS–REPFOTO/LONDON PHOTO AGENCY

NEIL YOUNG
Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere
Reprise

NEIL YOUNG
Neil Young
Reprise

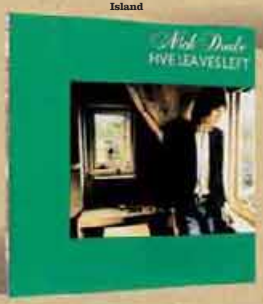
NME, 20 September 1969, page 8

These two albums, containing tracks recorded last year, have obviously been issued because Young has recently joined the Crosby, Stills & Nash group. They go to show just how much talent there will be in the quartet.

Young's forte is a plaintive voice, sounding not unlike Tim Hardin at times. He has a cynical side to his songwriting and is a more than competent guitarist.

There isn't much to choose between these two albums, but listen especially to 'Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere', 'Round & Round' and 'The Losing End' on the first; 'The Emperor Of Wyoming', 'The Loner', 'What Did You Do To My Life' and 'Here We Are In The Years' on the second. Full marks to Warner-Reprise for digging these LPs out of the cellar. Ex-Buffalo Springfield Young was, and member of a "supergroup" he is, but he more than stands up by himself. ***Gordon Coxhill***

NICK DRAKE
Five Leaves Left
Island



NME, 4 October 1969, page 14

Nick Drake is a new name to me, and probably to you. From an accompanying biography, I read that he is at Cambridge reading English, was "discovered" by Fairport Convention when they played on the same bill, and spent some time travelling in Europe, a trip which has greatly benefited his songwriting. I'm sorry I can't be more enthusiastic, because he obviously has a not unconsiderable amount of talent, but there is not nearly enough variety on this debut LP to make it entertaining.

His voice reminds me very much of Peter Sarstedt, but his songs lack Sarstedt's penetration and arresting quality. Exceptions are 'Mary Jane', a fragile little love song, and 'Saturday Sun', a reflective number on which the singer also plays a very attractive piano. ***Gordon Coxhill***

FAIRPORT CONVENTION
Liege & Leaf
Island

Disc and Music Echo, 13 December 1969, page 19

This is the last album from Fairport before their reshuffle in personnel and it seems to be a showcase for Sandy Denny, whose voice dominates every number.

As a group they seem to have come a long way backwards since their first album. The exciting electric sound of those days has been replaced with the most traditional of traditional folk, which doesn't make for too much animation – they've over-simplified.

It's a nice album in a rather insipid olde worlde fashion, but lacks life from a group who are capable of more.

THE BAND
The Band
Capitol

Disc and Music Echo, 22 November 1969, page 17

For the uninitiated: this is the group that accompanied Bob Dylan at the Isle Of Wight. But that should not be their only claim to fame: they are superb musicians in their own right, and this, their second album, enhances the reputation gained by their first mind-blower, 'Music From Big Pink'.

They have not changed style drastically, but subtly. Instrumentally, they are strong, driving, happy lyrical players who have carved a new sound, somehow, from the rich pastures of American country/rock/folk, for there is a little of all these on this album. Their vocals are gripping, and the songs, written by the group and mainly by Robbie Robertson, are better than on '...Big Pink'. In short, if you like a tight, rocking group, this album's for you.

CROSBY, STILLS 'LIVE' ARE A GAS!

Disc and Music Echo, 6 September 1969, page 15

It's hyperbole time again. Prepare thyselves, dear readers, for superlatives. Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young opened at the Greek Theatre in Hollywood for a week of nightly outdoor concerts. I was there for the first one, second row centre, and felt that old familiar thrill of emotional involvement that I had once experienced with the Buffalo Springfield. Only more so.

Joni Mitchell opened the show and she was truly good and pleasantly homespun in a sophisticated way. She forgot the words to one song and did an effective a capella song which revealed her Canadian opinion of American military aggressiveness. Very nice, really, but then there were Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young.

But first there were only three stools and three microphones. Crosby, Stills & Nash, opening with their album opener, 'Suite: Judy Blue Eyes', and then into The Beatles' 'Blackbird'. Nash and Crosby did two more, while Stephen retired to the wings; Young came out (looking unbelievably good, wearing an actual suit) and did one with Nash, then Stephen alone.

All this was acoustic and soft and lovely. Then the curtains in back parted, revealing a wall of electronic paraphernalia. The drummer and bass player materialised. The quartet plugged in. The audience plugged in.

By the time it was over the audience had demanded two encores and threatened to hurl themselves and the chairs on stage, but ultimately there was no violence. Merely waves of adulation.

The instrumentals were compelling, dynamic. Their voices were beautifully alternating combinations that give new definition to harmony. Most of the material was from the first CSN album, with three Neil tunes (one of which contains the great line, "*I can't believe it/I think I'll take it and leave it*") and two new Stephen tunes – both of them unbearably sad tales of loss and unrequited love. When Stephen suffers, he doesn't pretend to hide it.

The foursome were very human, accessible and vulnerable, not standing aloof in their coolness

But most of all, the foursome were very human, vulnerable, accessible. They didn't stand up there aloof in their coolness; they made corny jokes, looked awkward and sincere, and were obviously having a wonderful time. Graham Nash kept making tea and bad puns. David was too proud and happy to even make more than a feeble political diatribe, and Stephen managed to keep his "aw shucks" humility within reasonable bounds. Neil was Neil, which is more than good enough, always. They were absolutely wonderful. I wanted to take them home, all of them. ***Judy Sims***

CSN&Y warm up for Hollywood at the little ol' Royal Albert Hall, August 1969

REPFOTO–ROBERT ELLIS/REDERNS/ERIC HAYES

(l-r) Simon Nicol, Dave Swarbrick, Richard Thompson, Sandy Denny, a dog, Dave Mattacks, Tyger Hutchins

Fairport Convention

No group has worked harder for a hit than Fairport, says Nick Logan

NME, 16 August 1969, page 16

If it is true that in the final analysis the groups that last are the ones that have done the groundwork then Fairport Convention are set for a long stay. Few have worked with such devotion to evolving a music of their own, or so hard towards the recognition that is coming, than Fairport Convention.

Within a few days of reaching the record shops the group's third album, the oddly-titled 'Unhalfbricking', had streaked into the top half of the *NME* LP Chart. And if that isn't enough, their 'Si Tu Dois Partir' single from the album gives them their debut in the Top 30, entering this week at Number 27.

Now the success they've worked so hard for has come so suddenly it's taken Fairport a little by surprise. "Yeah, I suppose I'm happy about it," convoided vocalist Sandy Denny when we met last week. "Yeah, I am very happy. I am quite happy just ambling along towards the big success but when the big success is suddenly there at the other end of the street and getting closer it is a bit frightening. I am happy to watch people on *Top Of The Pops* and tear them to pieces like everybody else and then, when somebody good comes on, say: 'This is what we'd like to see.' Only when it comes along for you, it's a bit of a drag," she added, screwing up her nose for emphasis.

The diminutive sandy-haired Sandy was a solo folk singer before she joined Fairport just over a year ago. The possessor of a beautifully clear voice and of a reputation for consuming Scotch in large quantities, she also has a nice line in facial expressions, one of which is a melting smile.

No matter what Sandy said, as she perched on her stool beside a mounting line of empty glasses, I have a feeling that Fairport are more than a little thrilled now that 'Si Tu Dois Partir' has become a hit. That kind of success has been getting nearer for some time now. In the two and a half years since they were formed, Fairport have seen members leave – one die in a crash – and new members step in. A tragedy like that which took drummer Martin Lamble three months back would have seen the end of many groups. Not Fairport, whose young members put on years in minutes and found new strength. "The accident taught me that I loved them all," said Sandy.

In those years, the group's progress towards distinctly Fairport music has been steady and sure, and what they've arrived at is music that is highly skilled, yet simple at the same time, vital, honest and, most important, full of enjoyment and youthful spirit. As 'Si Tu Dois Partir' would suggest, there's humour there too. The idea for it came some time back one morning at the Middle Earth while the group was "hooting about" with 'If You Gotta Go'.

"We we would do it Cajun style," said Sandy, "using accordion and violin and singing it in French because Cajun people have this very Americanised French. Martin was playing his sticks on chair backs and it sounded nice. When we recorded it, we put Martin in a tiny box studio with two sets of chair backs and a selection of milk bottles. He was having a gas." That unmusical break towards the end, revealed Sandy, is the effect of Martin knocking chairs and milk bottles flying in his exuberance.

Sandy's opinion of 'Unhalfbricking' is that it is much better than the last album, 'What We Did On Our Holidays'. It is a lot more natural and not so produced as '...Holidays'," she commented. "The next album is going to be completely different. It will be based around traditional British folk music, which we may put new words to if necessary. And we've got a great violin player in Dave Swarbrick to help us."

An example of what Fairport is aiming at is 'A Sailor's Life', the traditional folk song arranged by the group on 'Unhalfbricking'. For material, they have been digging into the archives of the Folk, Dance And Song Society – the British Museum of folk music.

"We're not making it pop though," added Sandy in case of wrong impressions. "In fact it will be almost straight; only electric. What does it sound like? Heavy traditional folk music."

> "I'm happy to watch people on Top Of The Pops and tear them to pieces" Sandy Denny

FAIRPORT SPLIT

MM, 22 November 1969, page 3

Fairport Convention have been hit by a split, only a few months after reforming. Sandy Denny and Tyger Hutchings have quit to pursue solo careers, and Fairport will cease performances until a replacement for Sandy is found. A spokesman for the group said: "Sandy really can't cope with all the travelling anymore. She wants to concentrate on writing and she will start work on a solo album in February. She definitely won't be joining Eclection as has been suggested. Tyger has left to form his own band which will feature electric folk."

Folking off: Fairweather Fairport singer Sandy Denny goes solo

PENTANGLE
Basket Of Light
Transatlantic

Disc and Music Echo, 25 October 1969, page 19

Their albums have always been competent, and without a low spot. This goes one better and has several high spots.

Along with the refreshing all-acoustic instruments and Jacqui McShee's beautiful voice, two of Pentangle's own songs, 'Light Flight' and 'Springtime Promises' really make this album something to be cherished.

Jacqui adds a touch of the 'gin-soaked' voice, and very effectively too

On the bluesy 'Sally Go Round The Roses' Jacqui adds a touch of the "gin-soaked" voice, and very effectively too.

The number also showcased the guitar talents of John Renbourn and Bert Jansch – in their element on this type of number.

From glockenspiel to sitar, banjo to vocal… a great album.

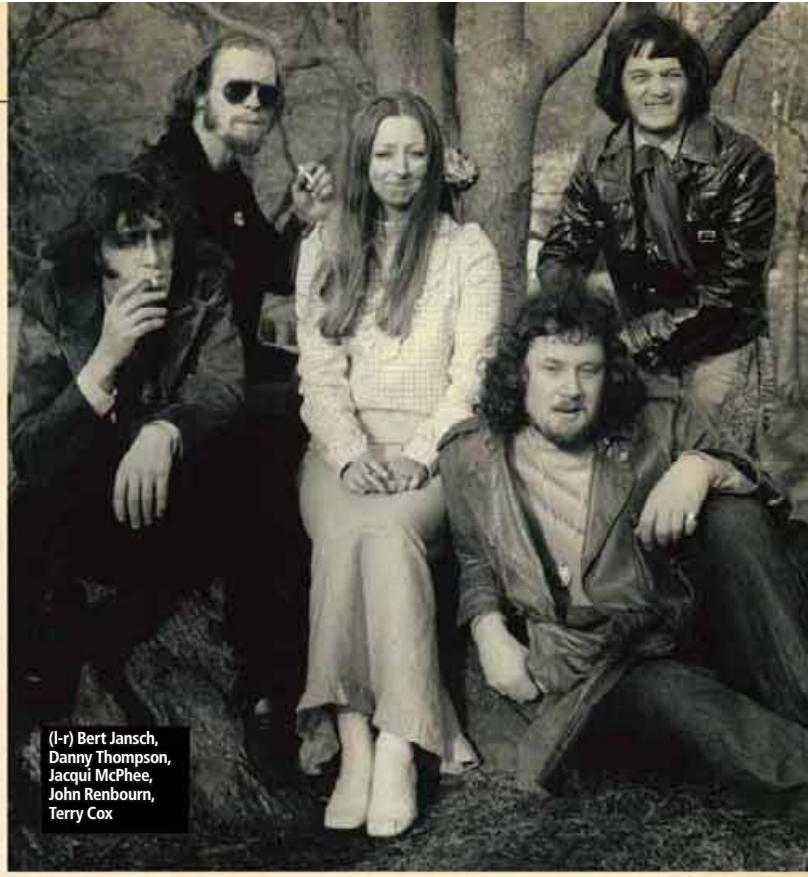
VAN MORRISON
Astral Weeks
Warner Bros

NME, September 27 1969, page 10

The gravel-voiced Irishman has come a long way since he fronted Them on things like 'Gloria' and 'Here Comes The Night'. Morrison has been living on the other side of the Atlantic for the past few years where he's enjoyed a couple of American hits and successes on the concert circuit.

This album is as far removed from Them as possible; Morrison sounding for all the world like Jose Feliciano's stand-in on eight of his own compositions. The comparison rather deadens the impact of the album because Morrison can't better or equal Feliciano's distinctive style. The songs themselves aren't very distinguished apart from the title track, and suffer from being stuck in one groove throughout. On the credit side there are some sensitive lyrics and arranger Larry Fallon's use of flute and eerie strings.

Nick Logan



(l-r) Bert Jansch, Danny Thompson, Jacqui McPhee, John Renbourn, Terry Cox

PENTANGLE

Unknown group with thousands of fans

Disc and Music Echo 18 October 1969, page 13

You may or you may not have heard Pentangle. It is more likely that you have simply heard **OF** them. But it is a group that has unobtrusively crept into a great many lives over the last two years. Crept, rather than electrically stormed.

They will look round after a show and realise they have just packed out the Albert Hall – "and that," says double bass player, Danny Thompson, "is a shock."

When Pentangle got together two years ago, none of them were newcomers to the musical scene. Bert Jansch and John Renbourn, the two guitarists of the group, met several years before when they both had reputations as solo artists round the folk clubs.

John met Danny and Terry Cox (percussion) when they were playing in Alexis Korner's Blues Band on a TV programme called *Gadzooks*, on which John was accompanying Doris Henderson.

John asked them along to play at the Horseshoe in London's Tottenham Court Road where he played every Sunday evening.

He brought along Bert, and also introduced them to Jacqui McShee, whom he had met several times singing round folk clubs and who sang with him on his second album – 'Another Monday'.

And that, although it may sound complicated, was the beginning of the Pentangle.

Pentangle is a five-sided star and comes from the word "Pentacle" which is the oldest mystical sign – used as a protection from evil spirits. John, says Danny, is "into all that."

From their first audiences of former fans, Pentangle's repute spread rapidly. There was no overnight recognition through the aid of a single in the chart – they still haven't had a hit single. But they are a fine example that a single isn't necessary to establish a group with international recognition.

They've done two major tours here, two in America, numerous festivals – at Newport this year they got a ten-minute standing ovation.

Why?

"I don't know," says Danny. "I think people were ready for music they could sit down and appreciate – not only the songs but also the music that went into them – the subtle things."

Their music is unique, and can most easily be put under the heading of Progressive Folk.

"We all play music which comes from these experiences of different kinds of music. I'm jazz-based, but I love folk. Bert is folk-based but he loves jazz," says Danny.

Their songs are a mixture of their own compositions and old traditional ones found by John, who does a great deal of research among the dusty archives to find old madrigals, medieval songs and anything he can lay hands on.

"Old traditional songs are so simple and really beautiful," says Danny. "To be simple musically is the most difficult thing to do.

"I'm definitely the non-writer of the group – I think too complicatedly. If you think of all the great composers, they use one note when other musicians would use a million.

"None of us have had any musical education except Terry.

"Bert has written so many songs. People copy him and his guitar things, but he doesn't care, he just goes on in his own sweet way. Donovan's dedicated two songs to him – 'Bert's Blues' and 'House Of Jansch.'

"Folk purists said at the beginning, 'Oh, that will never work' to our music but they accepted it. How long can you go down to folk clubs and hear the same songs done the same way every time? It can only go on so long.

"We're not trying to preach or profess to be innovators or anything – we are just us. It was a natural conclusion when we all got together."

They arrange the songs themselves, everybody contributing what they feel is right, and on stage with songs they've done for a long time they find they can never play it exactly the same way twice.

It is this freedom and independence within the group that keeps them fresh. And they always do solo numbers during a concert, teaming up with each other on the spur of the moment.

"Traditional songs don't have to be performed the same way for centuries – we don't bastardise them. We treat them with respect." Danny Thompson

"We want to express ourselves with this beautiful music. Traditional songs don't have to be performed the same way for centuries – we don't bastardise them. We treat them with respect."

As a group they get on very well together. Jacqui is treated "as one of the boys" which does annoy her at times.

But, says Danny, Pentangle loves what it's doing. They are totally involved in their music to the virtual exclusion of commercial and financial influences.

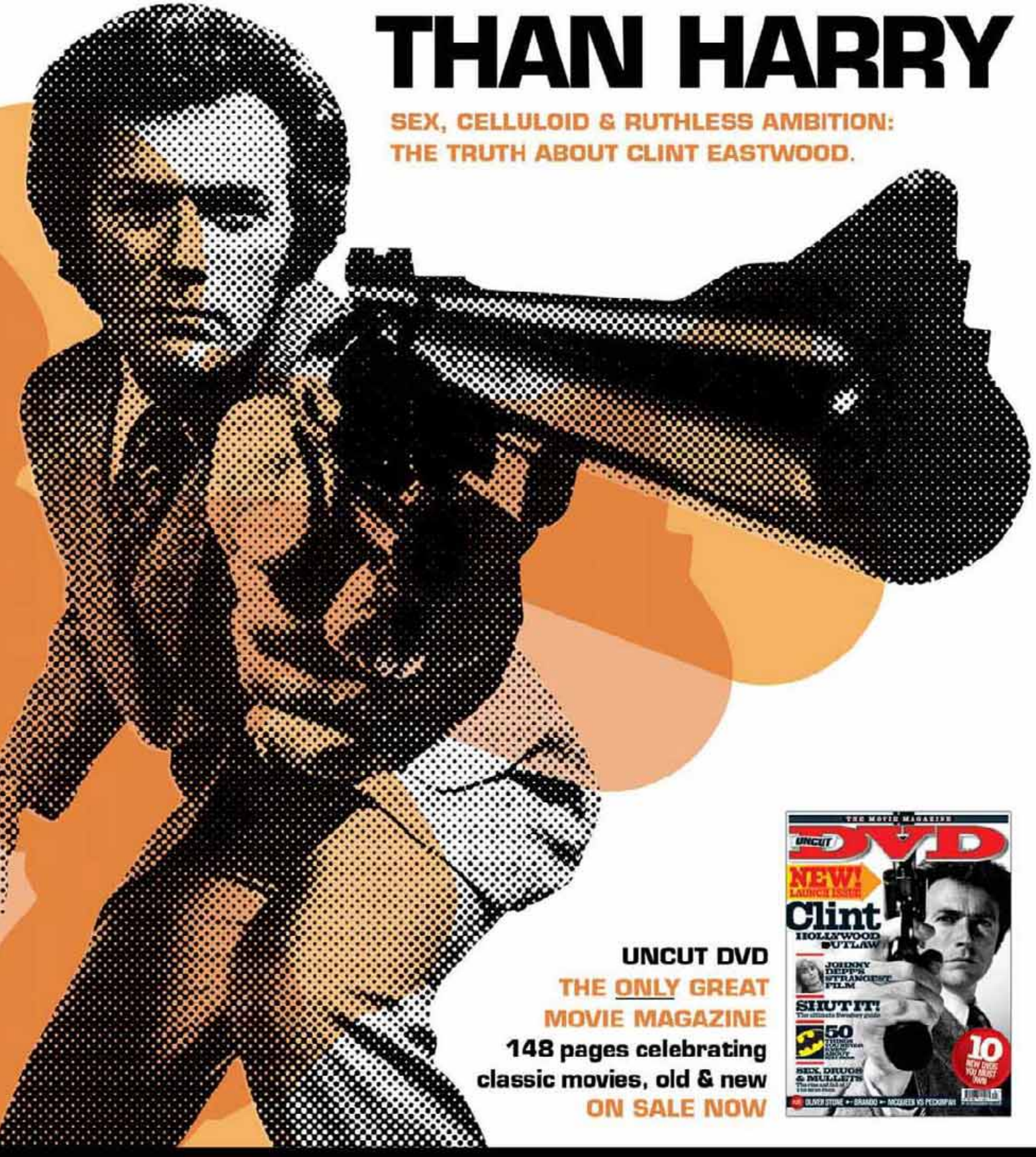
"Really," he says, "we must be the happiest group ever."

Caroline Boucher

© ROBERT ALTMAN-RETNA

EVEN DIRTIER THAN HARRY

SEX, CELLULOID & RUTHLESS AMBITION: THE TRUTH ABOUT CLINT EASTWOOD.



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Melody Maker

Beatles' future —by Paul

McCartney writes to the MM. Turn to page 29

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CROSBY, NASH TOUR

NICK LOGAN WITH JETHRO IN AMERICA

see pages 89

Continent

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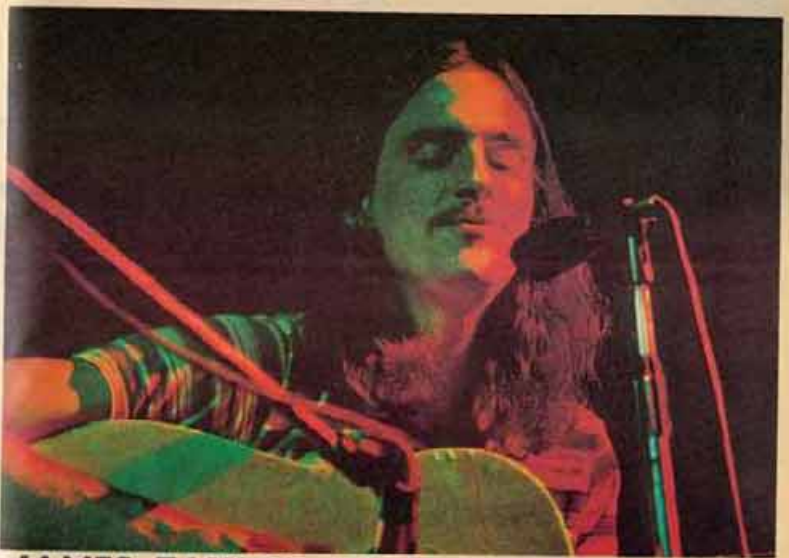
JULY 31 1971

LIFE WITH THE LENNONS centre pages

T. Rex LP - Harrison single - Diamond visit

FULL DETAILS PAGE 4



JAMES TAYLOR AT LINCOLN

see page 3

BRASS ROCK ROUNDUP inside

GIMME SHELTER

MOVE disowned

TEN YEARS AFTER, off to the United States again next month, tour British in September, and have a new album out at the same time. Rumours of a "split" in the group have been denied by drummer Ric Lee.

An extensive TYA tour here is planned between September 6 and October 3, including the possibility of THREE London dates.

Venues already arranged are confirmed to include BRISTOL (September 14), LIVERPOOL (15), NEWCASTLE (16), SOUTHAMPTON (20), LEICESTER (22), SCOTLAND (24, 25, 26), and SHEFFIELD (29).

TYA set for British tour and new LP in September

October 1, 2, 3.

TYA have been on holiday for the past three weeks, and started rehearsals for their fresh material yesterday (Wednesday). They kick off in the States on August 6 and return after three weeks.

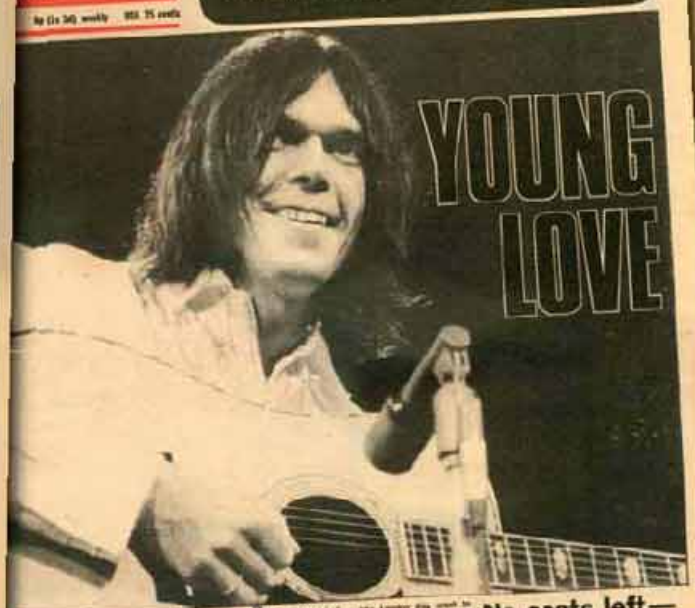
Rumours that the British tour would be a "farewell" have been flatly denied by drummer Ric Lee, who said this week:

"The rumours of a split are becoming a joke. As far as I'm concerned, everyone's together. It's a blowback from the decision to disband earlier this year. That changed our set and we formed a new direction completely outside 3 thirds, and feel fine."

TYA finished a new album last month.

Melody Maker

Santana tour dates



YOUNG LOVE

Benny Goodman back

No seats left— extra concerts?

CHAPTER 4

1970-1971

JAMES TAYLOR IS HAILED AS THE FOLKIE KING, JONI MITCHELL CROWNED THE QUEEN AND NEIL YOUNG JOINS THE CS&N PARTY

Joni brings a little Woodstock to the UK

A triumph for Joni

MM, 24 January 1970, page 6

Joni Mitchell must love England to the same extent that England loves Joni Mitchell. This fact was implicit throughout the whole of her two-hour concert at the Festival Hall on Saturday.

The walls were still shaking ten minutes after Joni had taken her second encore. Such was the greed and expectation, that hardly a person had left the hall when she finally returned for a farewell acknowledgement, and the audience rose *en masse*.

With great warmth and presence, the Canadian songstress appeared for the first set in a long red dress, her voice soaring and plummeting over that aggressive and characteristically open-tuned guitar.

After three numbers Joni moved to the piano and captured the audience completely by the nature of 'He Played Real Good For Free', a recent composition, which reflects her environmental change. She closed a well balanced first-half repertoire with the famous 'Both Sides Now'.

Next Joni appeared in blue and embarked on a much longer set which included 'Galleries', 'Hard' and 'Michael From Mountains', and with each song she drew the audience further into her.

> The walls were still shaking ten minutes after her second encore

An outstanding Richard Farina-style rock number 'They Paved Paradise And Put Up A Parking Lot' (*now known as* '*Big Yellow Taxi*') and the next Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young single, 'Woodstock', prefaced the finale which was an event in itself – Dino Valente's great song about brotherhood, 'Get Together'.

Jeremy Gilbert

VAN MORRISON
Moondance
Warner Bros

MM, 28 March 1970, page 29

If 'Astral Weeks' was the best surprise of 1969, then Van Morrison's new album is very probably the solidest rock achievement thus far in 1970. Gone is the Gypsy-like untogetherness of the rhythm section, which gave the earlier album so much of its charm and uniqueness, and in its place is a rather more solid band, borrowing from jazz and (especially) soul sources without being in any way unpleasantly eclectic. Morrison is now without the need to strive, he simply does, and what he does is precious without price. His voice now has the flexibility and variety of an Aretha Franklin, rather like Georgie Fame with the fat stripped away, and on the title track particularly he uses his voice with such rhythmic beauty and exactness that it flickers to and fro like a steel spring. All the tracks are superb, and some ('Glad Tidings', 'Brand New Day', 'Into The Mystic', and 'Moondance') are considerably more than that. '...New Day', for instance, uses the throaty humming of a black back-up choir in a completely un-clichéd way, and the alto sax solo by Jack Schrorer on 'Moondance' is something else, like a flashback to a Harlem 'jump' band of the '40s. The beauty of Van Morrison is that he takes his influences and sublimates them so completely that the end product is entirely unique. He's a rare talent, and this album will awaken a lot of people to him. ***Richard Williams***

CROSBY, STILLS, NASH & YOUNG
Déjà Vu
Atlantic

MM, 16 May 1970, page 22

Possibly the most eagerly-awaited set since The Band's second album, and contrary to some reports, it's no disappointment. Nevertheless, they've clearly been through some changes and the music here lacks some of the calm and limpid beauty of the first LP.

It's heavier, tougher, funkier, with far more emphasis on the bass and percussion of Greg Reeves and Dallas Taylor. And, of course, there's the brooding, inescapable presence of Neil Young, whose plangent, desolate 'Helpless' is the most compelling song on the album.

There's still room, though, for those familiar, floating, flawless harmonies and fine acoustic guitar work on the gentler songs, notably Graham Nash's delightful 'Teach Your Children', which is blessed with steel guitar from Jerry Garcia of the Dead. It's followed, in sharp contrast, by David Crosby's quirky, ironical 'Almost Cut My Hair' with its crashing, surging accompaniment.

The only dud is Joni Mitchell's 'Woodstock', a dull song with messy production.

But it's difficult to knock an album which communicates the solid pleasure of good musicians playing simple, honest music together. ***Alan Lewis***

The solid pleasure of good musicians playing simple, honest music together

MIKE McCARTHY/HENRY DILTZ–CORBIS

JAMES TAYLOR
MAN ON A TIGHTROPE

MM, 16 May 1970, page 9

When James Taylor arrives in England this summer a lot more people will sit up and take notice than the last time he was here. And yet for all his beautiful songs and two albums, he is still something of a mystery figure in this country.

Last summer the 22-year-old folk singer from Carolina was in England and appeared on the *Bobbie Gentry Show* and *My Kinda Folk*, as well as turning up at London's Marquee and the Speakeasy.

James is currently building his own house on a plot of 27 acres just off the coast of Massachusetts at Martha's Vineyard Island. But his friend Betsy Doster – friend of Taylor's manager Peter Asher – pointed out that James had received a British TV offer from Stanley Dorfman.

"He's trying to come to England, and it's just a question of working it in. I think he would like Joe Boyd to organise a small concert, and then he would just do that and the TV show and then go home again.

"He's doing mostly university and college concerts at the weekends and working on the house during the week. He's toying with the idea of filming but he's got no recording plans at the moment, although I know he wants to make a live album at some stage featuring the songs of other people which he does," added Betsy.

"James is still writing and has produced three new songs just lately. Sometimes he dries up for a couple of months, then he's OK again. James has been ill but he's fine at the moment and I think he's very happy; he really loves the island," Betsy told me over the transatlantic phone.

"I guess everyone has to pay their dues, and some people just can't pay them all off before they collapse."

As in America, the recent release of the 'Sweet Baby James' album immediately drew attention to the first Apple sessions. During the 90 days spent recording this album, the preoccupations and torments which hounded him, poured out in coloured arrangements. These he laid down, firm and symmetrical as a parquet pattern – but to understand his songs it is first essential to understand James as a person.

His lyrics speak of the mental upheaval which he had frequently experienced, and in his own words: "I am the product of a haphazard musical environment which, I suppose, makes me a folk artist; green rock'n'roll. Words about my lyrics are at best redundant."

The Apple product was exploited by no mass-sell gimmickry but as so often happens with the more aesthetic works of art, it was passed around by word of mouth; since then songs like 'Rainy Day Man' and 'Something In The Way She Moves' have been recorded by Tom Rush and Matthews' Southern Comfort.

Talent seems to run through the Taylor family, for James' brother Livingstone is also following in the same vein and Warner/Reprise in America seem likely to sign his sister Kate.

"When his health is good, the words and music flow readily from his frail and lofty frame," runs James's biographical press release. And primarily his songs are entertaining. But from the tales of love and loneliness, frustration and fulfilment which he always portrays in terms of night and day or the sunshine and the rain, his life seems to be polarised; finely balanced between two extremes like a man on a tightrope.

James Taylor's songs are bitter-sweet, but they are easy going, tender and beautiful. Depending on how you choose to receive them they can appear intensely savage statements or unceremonious platitudes.

But words about his songs are at best redundant – particularly now that they are at last in the public focus.

Jeremy Gilbert

From his tales of love and loneliness, which he always portrays in terms of night or day, sunshine or rain, his life seems to be polarised

Taylor: words about his lyrics are at best redundant

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Simon and Garfunkel's amazing reaction to London concert

Stevie Wonder phones from U.S.

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AUDIENCE HYSTERIA DISMAYED THEM

NME Exclusive

MIRANDA WARD, a friend of Simon and Garfunkel, gave up writing about pop music two years ago. On the advice of Artie Garfunkel, who admires her grasp of mathematics (they work out problems together), she will go to teacher training college soon.

But she could not resist the temptation to write the piece below, after having supper with Simon and Garfunkel in their hotel following their Albert Hall concert on Saturday. The NME is only too happy to print what she has to say, to pass on her warning that a too demonstrative audience could frighten off Simon and Garfunkel from future personal appearances . . .

SIX-THOUSAND five-hundred people witnessed with enthusiasm the return of Simon and Garfunkel onto an English stage after a two-year absence. Unfortunately this enthusiasm has most probably sparked off the funeral pyre! Yet only a small proportion of the audience will have felt it, I did.

We all remember the screaming hysteria of Beatle days of old. They don't perform as the Beatles any more. This could happen with Paul and Artie. They used to love appearing in England. The audience at Saturday's concert made them change their minds — and it could be for good.

No blame should be laid at the door of the first girl who ran on stage. She did it for a good reason. Paul explained to me after the show that she had noticed a broken string on his 12-string guitar and was afraid that he might cut his hand.

It was the second invader of the stage who sparked off the trouble. I think it would be fair to say that most pop bands secretly like a bit of excitement and its physical demonstration. Paul and Artie do not.

Atmosphere

They just like to sing in a rare club atmosphere. This can be, and has been, achieved by creative artists like them in a place the size of the Albert Hall—with co-operation from the audience. This co-operation was sadly lacking on Saturday. Two years ago their audiences were mainly folk - orientated people attuned to the sensitivity of Paul Simon's songs. The huge success of Bridge Over Troubled Water" has now turned Paul and Artie into a "pop duo," bringing them a wider audience. It's to these newcomers that I appeal.

Artie said on stage at the beginning that they were nervous. When he commented on this over dinner afterwards, he added that he might have known that no-one would believe him. Paul's reaction was just to look at Artie across the table as though to say "Did you expect them to?"

It is an insult to intelligent artists when they must be protected by police. Paul and Artie were hustled out of the Albert Hall immediately after stepping from the stage. If they had remained to see any friends, and generally start to unwind, it would have probably meant an escape, hours later, in laundry baskets, or something equally undignified.

It's the first time in their career that they've experienced this sort of thing in England. Maybe mistakenly, they hoped for a pleasant relaxed evening—not one that left them drained and depressed, like last Saturday.

It's the first time I've seen Paul and Artie, and particularly Paul, look so shattered after a concert. Usually they are tired, but happy, with a feeling of well-being which comes from singing to friends. This time they looked as though they had narrowly escaped ritual slaughter!

. . . and we ended up having a subdued dinner in the safety of their hotel—not daring to venture out for a more relaxing informal meal in a public restaurant.

It should be remembered that Paul and Artie have walked out before. "Top Of The Pops" was the event, when, against their wishes, Go-Go girls were dancing as they performed. That wasn't what Paul's music was written for, so they walked out.

Hounds?

Pop audiences do not have to behave like a pack of hounds after blood. Last year's Isle of Wight Festival proved that they can be beautiful, gentle and considerate—so there is some hope.

But Paul and Artie do have to appear before a British audience again as the concert on Tuesday—and if mob scenes are likely to erupt again, it may be their last appearance in Britain. This will sadden a lot of people, including Paul whose comment on Saturday's show was: "It wasn't like the audience of old friends who were at the Albert Hall before. They seemed to be just people who wanted to see a chart-topping act."

A creative artist like Paul will not stop writing songs, but after a repeat of last Saturday's show he will most probably stop performing. Both Paul and Artie have got enough outlets to satisfy their creative urges.

Artie has embarked on a successful film career with the satisfaction that when that palls he can get on with teaching mathematics, which he loves. He is a graduate of mathematics and architecture. Paul, too, could leave show business for teaching.

Paul's father, who I met on Saturday night, is a musician who has already left show business to teach full-time (his first love), and recently Paul himself has been teaching at New York University.

Paul and Artie loved performing in England and Paul's parents came from America on this trip to see the marvellous English audience. This only proved — we weren't marvellous!

For American artists English concerts are not a matter of profit but a labour of love. Let us keep it that way and be worthy both of their labour and their love.

SIMON and GARFUNKEL in concert at the Albert Hall on Saturday. Below, another stage shot of them.

Magic weavers of contentment

BY ANDY GRAY

WHEN they wandered onto the well-surrounded stage of the packed Albert Hall, London, on Saturday evening, after a slow-handclap to signify they were 15 minutes late, little, dark-haired Paul Simon and head-taller, blond Art Garfunkel reminded me of "Midnight Cowboy's" two main characters.

Not that Paul is a cripple or has a death-rattle cough, like Dustin Hoffman in the film — indeed Paul's voice was in great shape. Or that Art seemed to have ambitions to be a hustler, as portrayed by Jon Voigt. It was because they seemed so alone in such a vast hall and they seemed so friendly towards each other in that initial lonely fear.

They were informally dressed in street clothes — Simon with sleeveless pullover over a pink shirt and with blue jeans, while Art wore a black sweater with green and brown striped sleeves and a sort of badge on each arm. His trousers could have been black corduroy. Comfortable they looked and everything they did was comfortable, too.

From their entrance and the first bars of "The Boxer," a long, long powerful song, they were no longer alone. The fervent applause joined them to us and we never wanted them to leave again. "Homeward Bound" came next and then "Fakin' It." What performers! They made it look so easy, singing so quietly and earnestly the songs of Paul, who displayed a keen sense of humour when he told us he owned the Chappell piano company so he thought he'd have one on the stage. Then they made us feel groovy with the lighter, "59th Street Bridge Song."

Fuzzy-headed Art's high voice made magic of "Frank Lloyd Wright." And as reward for writing such a good song he gave Paul a cake, which Paul read and smiled at. It was all so informal and pleasant. Even the isolationist song, "I Am A Rock," had a tenderness. After this, Paul, who has a deeper, yet frail, voice, soloed his "Only Living Boy In New York," and in return Art soloed a love song which brought great applause.

Quick and quiet

To quicken the pace, Mrs. Robinson" bounced in, and to quieten it, we all went to the delightful "Scarborough Fair," with some very acoustic guitar playing by Paul. As in most Simon compositions, the music is sad, wistful, not quite mainstream, like the madrigals of old and indeed they could be troubadours re-incarnated to sing them. Huge applause greeted the end of this, which closed the first half.

One felt that not only was a superb performance being applauded, but a remarkable who had given great pleasure to so many.

The second half, after a generous interval, opened with a lovely "Bye Bye Love," the former Everly Brothers' hit, and got the crowd clapping to Simon and Garfunkel's next track, "Leaves That Are Green." It brought us back to the Simon sound, a sad, old song which seems to give you the feeling you get at a funeral, dropping the earth onto the coffin as the parson says "Dust to dust" . . . and you feel somehow purified. "Song For The Asking" and Paisley's "Dreamer" sustained the mood.

And as they went on weaving their mystic, bewitching spell, until they emerged once again with a really rousing song, "Please Mr. Conductor," a mini-drama about the boy with no ticket trying to get home before his mother dies. They sang this in unison so well that every word could be heard, as it had to be to get the song over. Other songs, which lost many on the buzz that the words were not so clearly enunciated and sometimes it was hard to catch the words, but on "Conductor," every word was crystal clear. Paul introduced this and "Dear Old Daddy" later for his parents, who were in the audience and liked this kind of music.

A highlight of the second half was Art's solo of "Bridge Over Troubled Waters" with Larry Knechtel at the piano (to player on the record) and Paul sitting listening, taking no part.

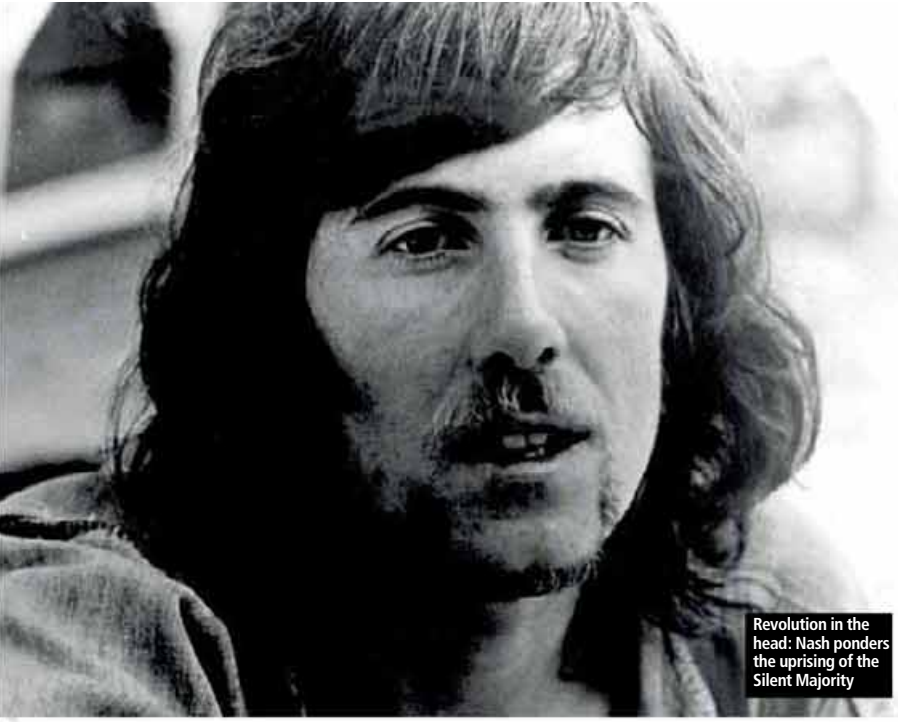
Art explained he has been living in a remote part of Scotland for some two months and one photographer who found him tried to get him to pose on a bump-backed bridge to illustrate his song hit. "The idea was so funny I nearly did it," Art confessed.

Quietly

He sang like bitter-sweet song so quietly and charmingly it became almost hymn-like, a privateness creeping from the sadness itself the applause was quite deafening, prompting, cheering, whistling inviting to the stopping. Sounds Of Silence" was greeted by those who heard it, claim. Suddenly a girl walked onto the stage and set up a table. Paul Simon bowed to her and told us: "It's part of the act." Art sat beside her as Paul soloed with his sensitive "Cathy's Song" and then they came together for "59th Street Bridge Song," a piece of growing-old philosophy.

The show had ended now, but shouts of "Encore" brought the duo back for another country song, "Dear Old Daddy," a fast-song piece of corn. More "encore" applause brought one more song, "A Most Peculiar Man," a fragile piece of music about a suicide, with a sad message and a pathetic charm.

This was the final song, Simon and Garfunkel bowed to the applause acknowledging the audience and thanking them, and then disappearing. All stood up and clapped and cheered and shouted "More" for a full seven minutes afterwards, until Tito Burns, who presented the show (for which there were no programmes, incidentally), explained that used for all of us, the MSS 30.



Revolution in the head: Nash ponders the uprising of the Silent Majority

NASH: WE MAY FIGHT, BUT MUSIC WINS

MM, 20 June 1970, page 25

Graham Nash, thank heavens, is still Graham. In his denim shirt, jeans, laced boots and a short, well worn waistcoat and a toothbrush sticking out of his shirt pocket, he's still very polite, very unpretentious, but more straightforward and honest, and a friend I was knocked out to see again.

Though there obviously were many bad times between The Hollies at the point Graham was leaving, there is no bad feeling now and he and Allan are getting back to being close again. He said he and Tony had gone through some very tough times but, "He was the first person in England to hear 'Déjà Vu'. I played it to him and he just listened, and when it finished he just took my arm and went on to talk about something else. But I knew without him saying anything that he dug it and that really blew my mind.

"The break had to come. I was on stage singing one song and writing another in my head. It became mechanical and that wasn't fair to me, the audience or the boys."

So began Crosby, Stills & Nash. We went onto the current happenings, with, of course, CSN&Y. Graham explained, with a lot of honesty and logic that, "We are four individuals with huge egos, who have an incredible love/hate relationship. We know each other so well that we know exactly how to push each other's trigger. We can and do incite love and hate, and we can cool each other out. Most managers will pamper to your needs, but not ours. When we're all spaced out, Elliot (*Roberts*) will come in and tell us it's a load of —. I love him.

"In England we couldn't put out two singles at once, and we couldn't put out 'Ohio' – those are some very strong lyrics." Graham's song 'Teach Your Children' and Neil Young's 'Ohio' (about the recent incident at Kent State University where four students were shot dead by State Troopers) were released in the US simultaneously this week.

"Our new bass player 'Fuzzie' (Calvin Samuels) is a quiet cat but really good. Steve found him in some club up the Edgware or Harrow Road. He came right over and learned all our material in two hours. When we played at the Albert Hall he stood at the stage door for two hours, but couldn't get in 'cos he hadn't got a ticket. And now a few months later, here he is playing with us.

"Wow, Greg (*Reeves, former bassist*) was some cat. He really got spaced out coming from Motown and joining us. He also got very involved with being an Indian witch doctor, and would go around in feathers carrying a case of potions. Going through customs if the guy would try to open the case, he'd say he couldn't 'cos there were magic powders in it. It never got opened.

"Dylan was in last night, and we were all trying to be so cool, but like it was DYLAN, man. So instead of doing all the four numbers we usually do to get us into it, we just did what we individuals felt like. That's what's such a gas, there's no set, no routine, or anything. We just do what we feel like. We can try out anything.

"I really feel America needs me. The blacks and the long-hairs are treated as second-class citizens. Nixon did an incredible thing by 'inventing' the Silent Majority and putting them on his side. But I'm not sure anymore that people are unaware and won't say things. Let's say we were in France in the 18th Century and I could be a pianist or something, we'd be talking about the same feeling of unrest and saying we're not sure it could happen. But they had a revolution and people were wiped out. After the incident at Kent I thought there would be more bloodshed. Something has to happen. I just don't know what's going to happen." ***Vicki Wickham***

> "We are four individuals with huge egos, who know how to push each other's trigger — we can and do inspire love and hate"

MM, 6 June 1970, page 4

How long can CSNY survive?

Hollywood, Tuesday

RUMOURS of the demise of Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young have been circulating since the group's formation last year. However, recent incidents involving cancelled dates, replacement of musicians, and reports of continued illness have catapulted the rumours into the near-fact category.

FACT ONE: CSNY have cancelled all dates during last week. The reason given for the cancellation was Graham Nash's throat condition, a condition that forced the group off the performance stage last summer. FACT TWO: Neil Young walked off stage in the middle of a performance. No explanation given. FACT THREE: both Dallas Taylor and Greg Reeves have been replaced. Clavin Samuels is the replacement on drums. FACT FOUR: the concert tour IS resuming with the missed dates to be made up after the last June commitment.

THE RUMOURS insist that not illness but ego is plaguing the group; a rumour that has been persistent since last summer. Most of the Press corps are holding their breath that the group will stay together to honour their Atlantic contract which calls for one more joint album. However, a spokesman for the label insists that the entire group will return to the studios to record that infamous album as soon as the tour is completed. He further declares that the group will also honour a commitment to tour at the beginning of next year.

THE SPOKESMAN did admit however that this tour had been a particularly gruelling one, involving night after night of continuous playing. "I don't know why they book a tour like that," he stated. "The group just doesn't need that kind of pressure. It's no secret that they're the top group in the country . . . they sold out six nights at the Fillmore East in just one afternoon . . . so they really don't have to kill themselves for the bread."

TO FURTHER complicate matters concerning money, CSNY have been accused of asking exorbitant prices for VIP seats.

TO ADD to that complication, each member of the group is going into the studios to cut individual albums.

THE TEMPER of the United States isn't helping matters either. Neil Young admitted, before leaving on the tour, that he was afraid to perform throughout the country. He was afraid of concert riots, and possible violence.

WHAT ALL this amounts to is that it's still up for grabs as to whether CSNY, the group of this year and last, will be around much longer.

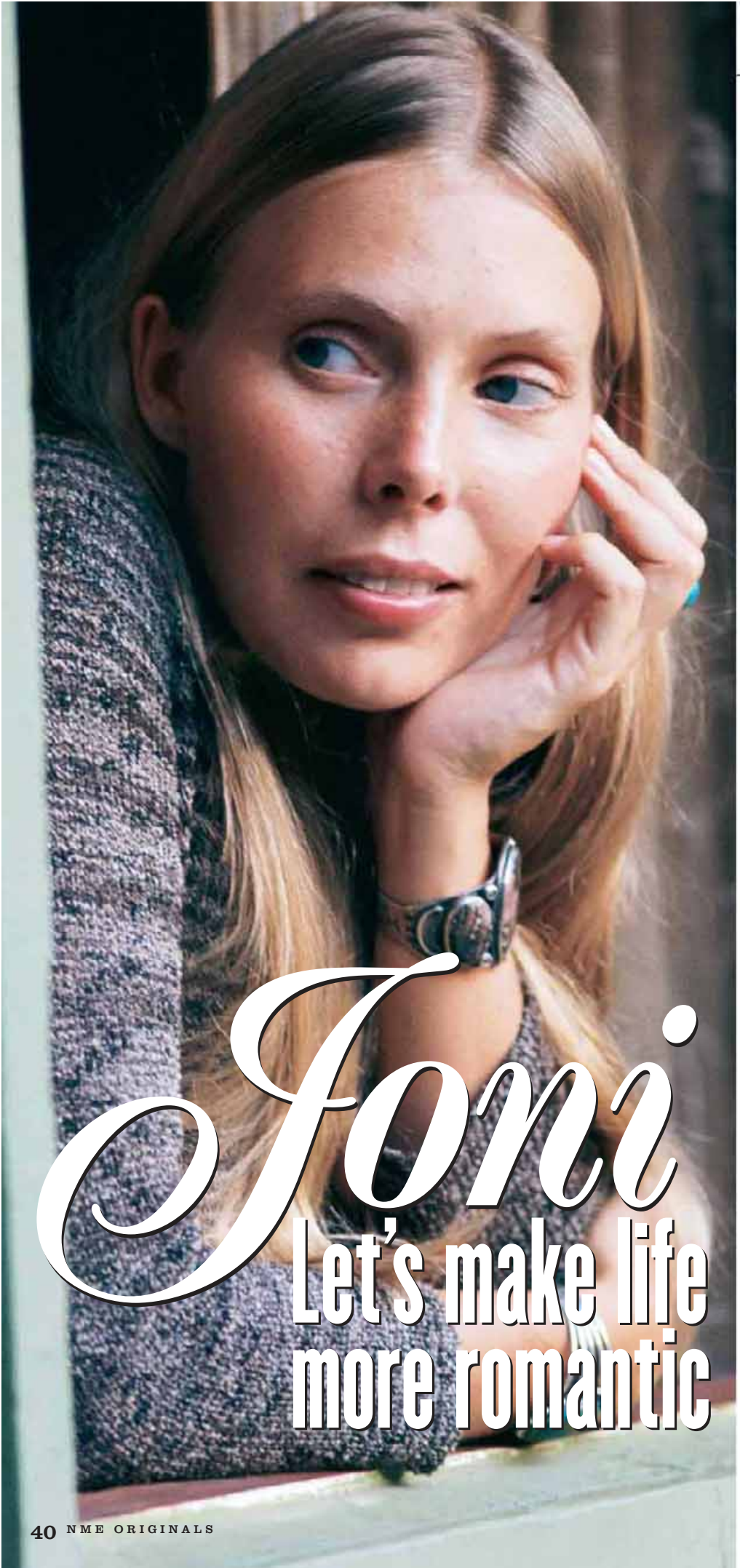
LONDON PHOTO AGENCY

SIMON & GARFUNKEL
Bridge Over Troubled Water
CBS

NME, 7 February 1970, page 29

It's been 18 months since the release of Simon & Garfunkel's last album, and for much of its length 'Bridge Over Troubled Water' makes the wait worthwhile. It's full of the delicate, rather fey charm we've come to expect from Paul Simon's compositions, and is enlivened by a generally responsible use of rock techniques which frequently gives the record some of the carefree joy of a middle-period Beatles LP. 'The Boxer', with its terrifying sound effects is well known, while best of all is probably the title track, a pleasant tune sounding for all the world like something from a Methodist hymnal, sung over rolling piano before an abrupt change of mood takes it to a furioso climax with more than a touch of the Spectors. There are a few dull moments, when Simon's touch deserts him and he becomes merely ordinary, but they're worth enduring for the jewels they surround. Not another classic like 'Bookends', but still worth hearing. ***Richard Williams***

It's enlivened by a generally responsible use of rock techniques



Joni

Let's make life more romantic

MM, 20 June 1970, page 24

Joni Mitchell is a poet whose time has come. Because she uses the vehicle of music, her words and thoughts reach out to countless minds. With Joni, there is no restriction of reading or schooling; she sings her poetry and brings it to the people.

In the past year, Joni has emerged as a major force in music. Her songs, once the exclusive property of a few, have become the catchword of many.

Her songs are reflections of a very feminine way of looking at life. All too seldom in music, and indeed in any art form, is the female view of the world set down. Joni does just that.

One critic suggested that women think in a complicated manner and speak in simple terms. This could certainly be said of Joni's material; but her simplicity reveals a sensitivity and awareness that few composers possess today. With phrases like "*know that I will know you*" and "*while she's so busy being free*" we are given an entire picture of a woman's mind and heart at work.

Joni has been seeing situations and storing them in her memory and in her music since her birth in Canada some 25 years ago. She originally wanted to be an artist, a desire she still retains.

In the mid-'60s Joni came to America and played in clubs, travelling the folk circuit in the East, bravely waiting out her turn to make the mark.

But the single folk singer was on the way out – rock was coming in, and managers figured, with a Joan Baez and a Judy Collins, who needed a Joni Mitchell?

Fortunately, fellow folk singer Tom Rush heard Joni's songs and introduced her material to his following and the writer to Judy Collins.

The result was an invitation to sing at the Newport Folk Festival and Miss Collins' recordings of 'Both Sides Now' and 'Michael From Mountains'.

Her present manager, Elliot Roberts, brought her to the attention of Reprise records. Her first album was 'Song To A Seagull'. It sold only moderately; but she became an underground "find". With 'Clouds', Joni's second album, it was evident that she had arrived; with 'Ladies Of The Canyon', her third album, it is evident that she is exalted. With each album there has been more music, more of an effort to bring in other musicians. But despite added instruments and group singing on various stages, Joni remains forcefully a loner.

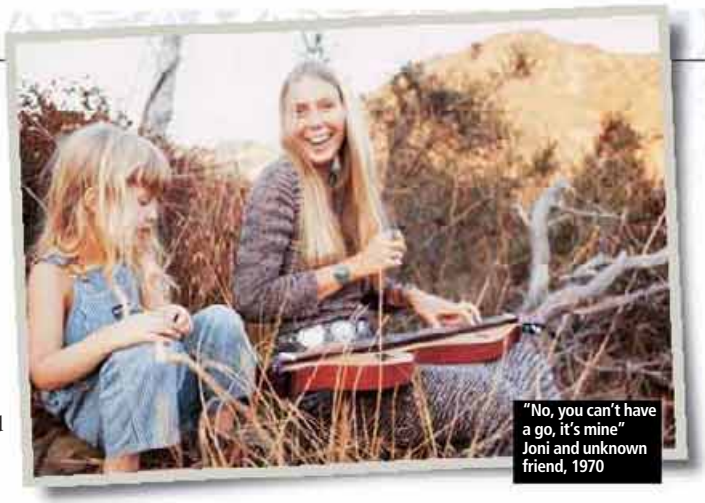
"I flat-pick my music and I know there are places to be filled in," she told us. "There could be more texture to it. When I finger pick, I play the melody line and in many cases that's the way it stays. When I've finished a song, I've honed it to a point where it's a completed song to me. And anything that is added might to other people sound better and more complete, but to me it sounds extraneous.

"I'm very serious about my music and so I like that seriousness to remain. When I play with other people, I like that to be for fun. It's on another level… a looser level where a sense of my own imperfections doesn't enter into it, because it's just for my own pleasure. It would be difficult for me now to learn to play with other people, like teaching an old dog new tricks."

Until 'Ladies Of The Canyon' Joni's melodies have emphasised her past association with folk: simple and straightfoward, they encompassed little of what rock has brought to the music scene.

However, her present association with rock

HENRY DILTZ–CORBIS



"No, you can't have a go, it's mine" Joni and unknown friend, 1970

musicians has somewhat liberated Joni, and you can hear that change in 'Ladies...'. "I guess there will just come a time when I'm hearing more music than I'm able to play and then the change will come about naturally," she says.

Joni does not see adding musicians as back-up men as a step toward co-writing. "I don't think I could do that for the same reasons I can't play professionally with other people. I know what colours I want to use, I'm too opinionated… no, that's not the word I want. It's just that I feel too strongly about what the finished thing should be, whether it's music or a painting.

"I mean, how many times do you hear about painters working together? The Fool are three painters who paint together, but how many times do you hear of that? I feel very much about my music like I feel about my painting.

"If I were working for a master and he came up to me and said 'Well, if you put a brush stroke of red in that corner, you'll save it' I would have to reject his way of saving it or improving it until I could find a solution of my own which was equally right."

Joni's strong desire to be independent and an entity unto herself can seem at times a contradiction with her own gentleness and music. However, it somehow isn't. Early on Joni was criticised for being too feminine, too romantic ("*secrets and sharing sodas/that's how our time began*").

But just how a woman can be too feminine isn't really clear to Joni, who sees the lack of womanliness in her contemporaries as one of the worst aspects of progress.

"I think there's a lack of romance in everything today. I went to see the film version of *Romeo And Juliet* which is supposed to be the epitome of romance and I thought it was very unromantic. Everything was too perfect.

"I think that women are getting a bum deal. I think we are being misguided. It's just follow the leader. Like for a long time I wouldn't go out without wearing my false eyelashes, because I thought that without them I was plain. You know, that's really silly isn't it? But that's what happened.

"There's the fear of the big hurt, we're taught to be very cool. And be noncommittal. That's the thing about places like Italy. Like they're encouraged to say, 'Oh, I love you my darling' and then if it doesn't work out they all say, 'Poor little Emilio, his heart is breaking' and nobody puts him down.

"You know, they're all very kind, they shelter him because he's mourning openly for the loss of someone. Whereas in America you stifle that so much… well, anything that's repressed and goes underground really gets distorted. You don't know what you want after a while if it's repressed.

"I can't play professionally with other people. I know what colours I want, I feel too strongly about what the finished thing should be" Joni Mitchell

"Even if I'm writing about myself, I try to stand back and write about myself as if I were writing about another person. From a perspective. It's really tough because I want to explain to you how I write, but I can't. It's just standing back and getting another perspective on it. I step back and carry on a conversation with myself.

"It's almost schizophrenic. You lay out a case and argue with yourself about it and with no conclusions. But I have to write a long time after something has happened, because when I'm in the middle of something I'm totally emotional and blind. I can't get a perspective on it."

Like many poets, Joni insists that her lyrics be worked over until every word is absolutely necessary and cannot be altered. She admires both Dylan and Leonard Cohen, although each for their differences.

"Leonard's economical, he never wastes a word. I can go through Leonard's work and it's just like silk. Dylan is coarse and beautiful in a rougher way. I love that in him. I think I'm a belated fan, at least my enthusiasm is growing the more I live in urban places.

"Before I lived in cities I couldn't see what he meant. I'd never known what the street meant. I was sheltered, I hadn't seen the injustices. Now I can understand him."

Her ability to understand and transform has made her almost a legend in the United States. Critics and listeners alike rhapsodise over her songs and her psyche. She is fulfilling something of a "goddess" need in American rock, a woman who is more than a woman; a poet who expresses a full range of emotions without embarrassment.

Her legend is beginning to obscure her work; because she is virtually without competition (Joan Baez and Judy Collins don't have the output; Buffy Sainte Marie doesn't have the immediate newness), she is without comparison. Her work for now goes almost totally without question, without debate.

Success has worked its hardships on Joni's life as well. With sold-out concerts comes demands on personal time and involvement. After 'Ladies Of The Canyon' she split to Greece for sun and silence. She said she needed the time to be alone and find her creativity again.

Her house, redwood and hand-honed, high in Laurel Canyon (Los Angeles) stands empty and waiting.

One of her many treasures within the house is a grandfather clock which refuses to tick… it's too old to be repaired… it stands idle, useless and beautiful.

That in itself tells us as much about the lady as anything she might write.

Jacoba Atlas

BOB DYLAN
Self Portrait
CBS

MM, 20 June 1970, page 5

Bob Dylan's new double-album, 'Self Portrait', when coupled with his recent studio adventures in the company of George Harrison, seems to suggest that he might be about to come out of his Garbo-like era of seclusion.

The overriding feeling of 'Self Portrait''s 24 tracks is one of openness, of a desire simply to sit down and play music. Of course, that's what he and The Band have been doing in Woodstock for five years, but the crucial decision is to come out into the open and do it. The Isle Of Wight was an attempt to do just that, but the event naturally received so much publicity that Dylan ran scared, and was forced back into retreat. Now, I feel, he's trying it again, and this time it may work better.

'Self Portrait' is a vast panoramic view of everything that Dylan digs to sing and play. Most of it refers back to earlier eras, with a much higher level of integration than on such previous attempts (such as 'John Wesley Harding', for instance), and the few songs which don't are remarkably old-fashioned.

On most of the tracks he uses guitar, piano, bass-guitar and drums, which combine in a sound which has the airy, open quality of '...Harding' plus a little more funkiness. That's not all, though: strings, brass, a female choir, and other unorthodoxies all make their appearance. ***Richard Williams***

FOTHERINGAY
Fotheringay
Island

NME, 4 July 1970, page 10

The field of folk rock gains new champions with this debut album, fulfilling much of the promise of a full-of-promise group.

It's not so much a barrier-shatterer or a mind-blaster, more a gentle, insinuating affirmation of what is one of the most exciting and open idioms on the current scene.

Fotheringay is, if you need reminding, the Fairport-Eclection-Poet And One Man Band tie-up, led by ex-Fairport singer Sandy Denny and Eclection's Trevor Lucas.

The album is a good cross-section of their style, their own and traditional material sung by either Sandy or Trevor to an equally important backdrop of gently undulating acoustic and electric work. Their ensemble playing is particularly classy and controlled on numbers like Gordon Lightfoot's 'The Way I Feel' and Sandy Denny's 'The Sea' with its rippling quality enhanced by fine Jerry Donahue electric guitar.

'Banks Of The Nile', a traditional anti-war song, has Sandy, vocally and Fotheringay, instrumentally, at their best.

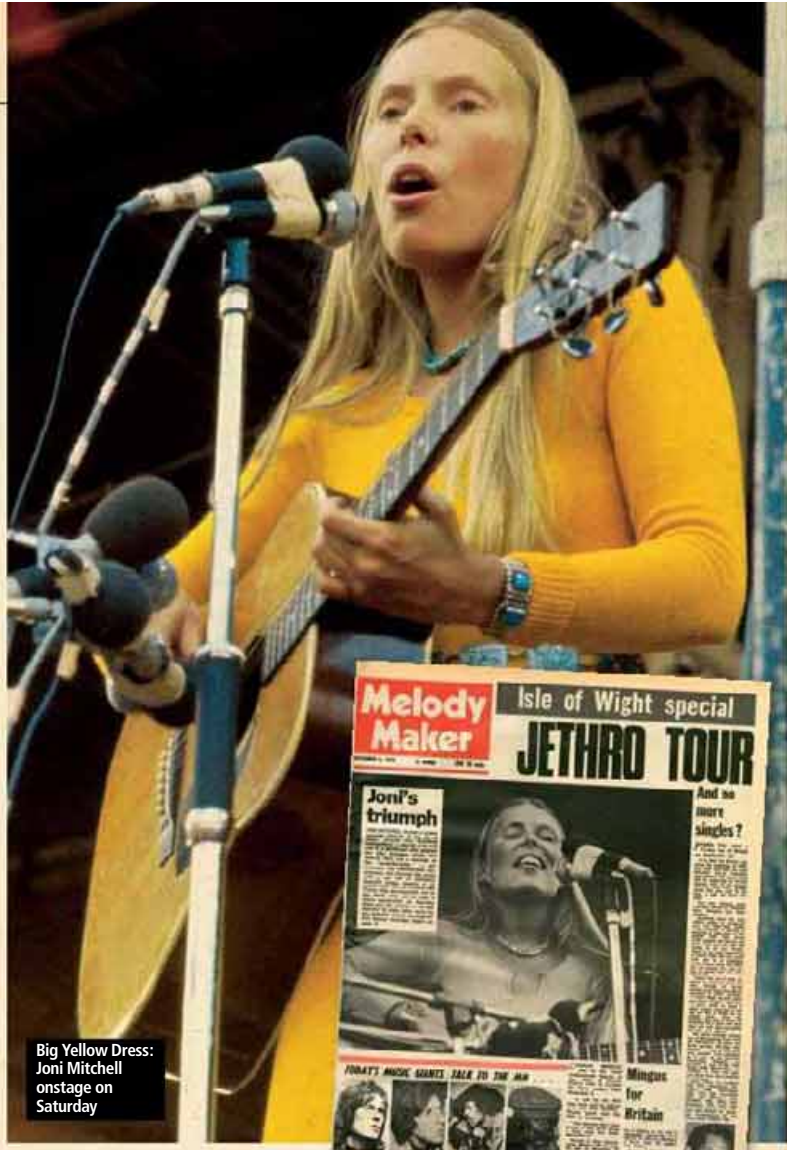
'Peace In The End', with the two singers working together, rounds off a classy debut. ***Nick Logan***

It's not so much a mind-blaster, more a gentle, insinuating affirmation

WEEKEND THAT ROCKED BRITAIN!

The 1970 Isle Of Wight festival saw a host of artists playing into the small hours to over 600,000 fans

MM, 5 September 1970, page 24



Big Yellow Dress: Joni Mitchell onstage on Saturday

Saturday

TIE-DYED John Sebastian opened Saturday's programme with what eventually proved to be one of the most satisfying performances of the whole festival.

With that unique mixture of whimsy and open-hearted fun, John first shouted: "Just holler 'em up, and I'll play whatever you want to hear," They did, and John went through 'You're A Big Boy Now', 'Nashville Cats', and others before a most extraordinary thing happened.

He received a note, handed up from the audience, which he read out: "Just ask Zally up on stage." Zally, of course, was his old colleague Zal Yanovsky from the Spoonful, and together they worked their way through more old favourites like the gorgeous 'Darling Be Home Soon', which was blessed with great lead guitar work by Zal. Both of them were having a ball, feeling their way through the old songs, and it was a nostalgic sight.

By this time John had been playing for two hours, but the crowd wouldn't let him go. He sang a tender 'Younger Girl', which gained extra effect from the way he groped for the part-forgotten words and changes.

Finally, after 140 gloriously unforgettable minutes, he waved his way off stage having exhausted himself and his repertoire.

After they'd left, compere Rikki Farr announced "a lovely surprise for you – JONI MITCHELL!" and on she walked, diffident yet majestic in a long dress the colour of golden-rod.

The vibes were good, nurtured by Sebastian and retained by the crowd, but halfway into 'Chelsea Morning' she stopped, declared, "I don't feel like singing that song so much," moved over to the piano, and announced that she'd sing 'Woodstock'.

Suddenly, with a terrifying swiftness, the vibes turned right around. A man in the VIP area, 25 yards from the stage, cried "Help… we need a doctor", and all eyes swung towards a swaying, puppet-like figure obviously on the worst of bad trips.

In an instant, the stage was full of frightened eyes and everyone was standing, staring at the ghastly figure who was resisting attempts to drag him away. Joni went back to the piano stool, picked out the opening chords of 'Woodstock', and began the song. She could not have made a worse choice. At that moment we were anything but stardust and golden, and the garden had become a place of squalor.

The atmosphere settled slightly, but was still charged with electricity when a man approached the microphone and started to recite "a very important message for the people on Devastation Hill". He was not allowed to continue as the stagehands and Joni's retinue pinioned his arms and forced him off, and the crowd began to bay: "Let him speak… let him speak."

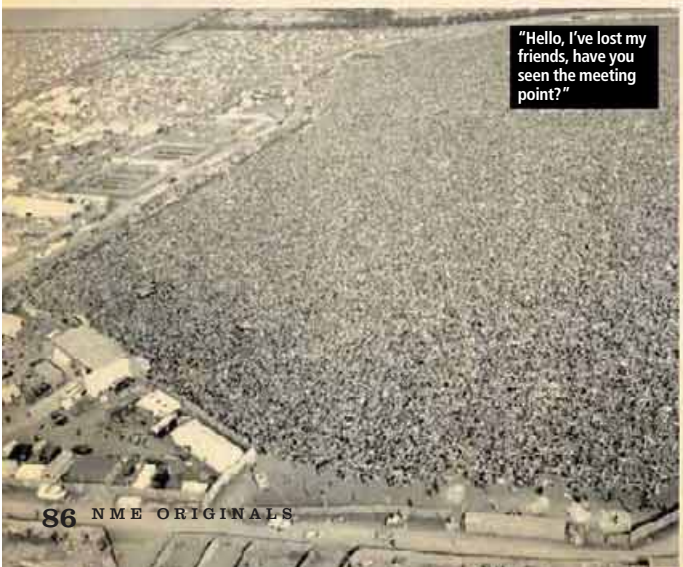
Joni, badly shaken, came forward and made a little speech about how when she performs for an audience she puts herself into it, and how she gets off on her music.

"Last Sunday, I went to a Hopi Indian ceremony, where some of the Indians were behaving like tourists. I think you're behaving like tourists, man… give us some respect!" It was a concise, emotional diatribe on the relationship between art and life, and it got through.

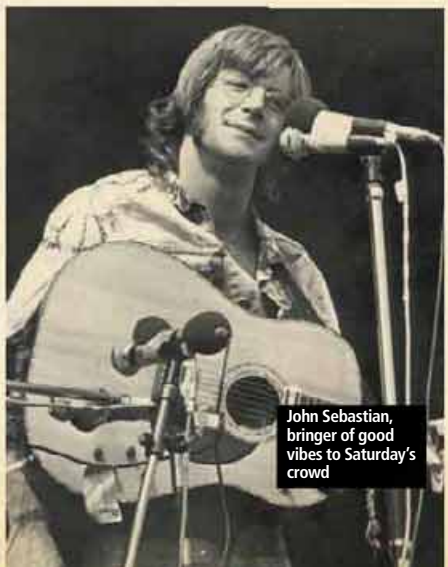
She sang again, and lightened the atmosphere with 'Willy', her heartbreaking song about Graham Nash, and a new ballad called 'California' about homesickness, on which she played the dulcimer. She was called back for four encores, and by the time she went off she'd averted a potentially dangerous situation simply through the pure beauty of her songs.

Sunday

SUNDAY dawned warm if a little duller than Saturday, and the music was begun by Kris Kristofferson, an American singer who was unjustly chased from the stage by boos and jeers on Thursday night.



"Hello, I've lost my friends, have you seen the meeting point?"



John Sebastian, bringer of good vibes to Saturday's crowd

SKR PHOTOS/LONDON PHOTO AGENCY/PA PHOTOS/DICK BARNATT–REDFERNS

Accompanied by Zal Yanovsky, the composer of 'Sunday Morning Coming Down' fared much better this time round, and paved the way nicely for another singer/composer on the way up: Ralph McTell.

Despite his self-confessed nervousness, McTell was as melodic and as dextrous as ever. As soon as his feet touched the stool's cross-bar, he accelerated into Blind Boy Fuller's ragtime blues 'Truckin' Little Baby'. His song of schooldays, 'Chalk Dust', was well received, as was his ballad about loneliness in the metropolis, 'The Streets Of London', already a folk standard.

The first "free" music was provided by Donovan, who arrived on stage alone with an acoustic guitar. His style was mellow, comforting, typically his own; a mixture of traditional Scottish ballads and his own brand of Celtic Rock. For one song, which he announced as being a "heavy philosophical number", he was joined by three small blonde boys called Julian, Jake and Charlie. It turned out to be a kids' song about dogs peeing against trees, and only the lovely naiveté of the kids saved it from yuckiness.

After that came several of his hits, like 'Hurdy Gurdy Man', and 'Atlantis', before he picked up an electric guitar and was joined by the other two members of Open Road: Mike Thomson (bass-guitar and 12-string guitar) and John Carr (drums and bongos).

Leading off with 'There Is A Mountain', they played very tightly and gave us songs like 'Train Whistle Blues', 'Season Of The Witch', and the amusingly controversial 'Poke At The Pope'. Don obviously enjoys playing with a band, and they demonstrate considerable togetherness, but there was a distinct lack of adventure about the undertaking.

Pentangle next took the stage, and got off to an incredibly bad start. The sound was appalling in both balance and quality, and the consequent lack of definition reduced their output to sheer boredom.

They were also plagued by the anarchists, who diverted attention from the music by attempting to rip down the walls despite Farr's pronouncement that the festival was free. A seemingly interminable wait, while John Renbourn tuned his sitar and Bert Jansch did the same to his banjo, scarcely brought them favour either.

But the lovely 'Light Flight' brought the audience back, and from thereon out they went from strength to strength, producing delightful versions of two favourites: 'Bruton Town' and 'Pentangling'.

Joan Baez is a true folk-singer in the real sense of the word, in that her material is drawn from all sources, but basically the popular songs of the day. She seems to have abandoned any attempt at purity of style, and on Sunday night/Monday morning she was content to leave the choice of numbers up to her audience for the most part.

On this account she sang songs as far-ranging as 'Farewell Angelina', 'Oh Happy Day', and 'Let It Be', with a couple of Spanish numbers and a childlike Italian song thrown in for good measure, and the only two things that were remotely interesting were Jesse Winchester's 'The Brand New Tennessee Waltz' and The Band's 'The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down'.

Pentangle were plagued by anarchists, who diverted attention from the music by attempting to rip down the walls

One can't somehow take her seriously as a musician and singer anymore; she is more of a personality devoted to causes with a capital C. Yet she has remained enormously popular. Her rapport with her followers is based on genuine mutual affection, and she projects real warmth and spontaneity.

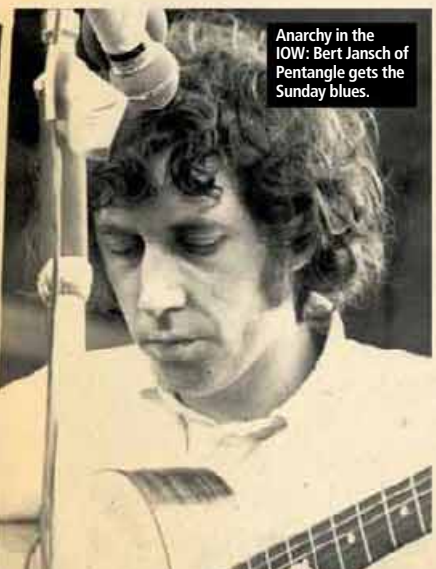
Richie Havens and Leonard Cohen got on to play at some ungodly hour of the morning. Havens went through a mostly familiar set in which he successfully recreated the excitement of his Woodstock rendering of the 'Sometimes I Feel Like A Motherless Child'/'Freedom' thing, and he ended on a good note with a Hare Krishna mantra.

Cohen, supported by The Army, did a couple of new songs in a set which also included a beautiful treatment of 'Lady Midnight', one of his most melodic, caressing songs.

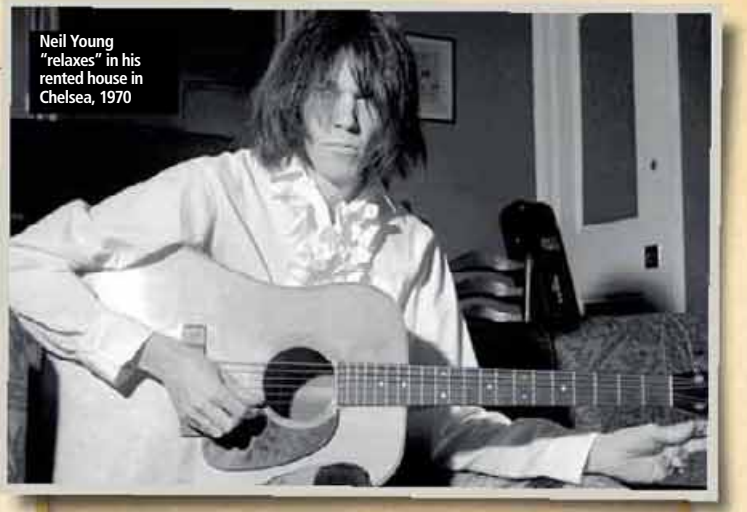
Whether he's the kind of artist best heard in the company of half a million other people is another matter, though – he seems such a private singer, that he's best heard in comparative seclusion.

As the light came into the sky, and the music ended, the weather changed with symbolic abruptness. The sun which had beaten down for three days vanished, replaced by a biting wind and a cold intermittent drizzle, to make the business of going home that much more unpleasant.

What could have been a pilgrimage ended with shivers and sneezes, but much good humour remained to console the



Anarchy in the IOW: Bert Jansch of Pentangle gets the Sunday blues.



Neil Young "relaxes" in his rented house in Chelsea, 1970

NEIL YOUNG
After The Goldrush
Reprise

NME, 3 October 1970, page 10

The unfolding talent of Neil Young, budding with Buffalo Springfield, blossoming on his "solo" albums and with Crosby, Stills and Nash, has been a joy to follow.

The brilliant Canadian, already regarded by a fast growing body of American aficionados as a greater talent than C, S and N combined, is without doubt destined to become a giant of the '70s.

Young is a creator of images that stand out like silhouettes against a landscape

Young is a painter of songs, a creator of images that stand out like silhouettes against a landscape, a sketcher of fragments of scenes that leave the listener to complete the picture.

'...Goldrush', (released October 16) his third solo collection, is his finest achievement to date.

Running a line from romanticism to politics, '...Goldrush' proves that Young is equally at home at either end; the fact that both sides can sit comfortably on one LP being fair measure of his skills.

Not that the heavy-handed polemics of some of his contemporaries has any place in the Neil Young style.

Hence the stunningly chilling 'Southern Man' isn't allowed to close one side, as a song of its power would on most albums, but leads into a minute-long, jokey piece containing a trumpet Herb Alpert would be proud to put in his brass.

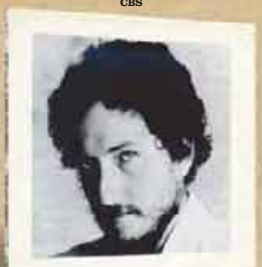
Basically the material can split into two camps, the simple emotive love songs and the more potent lyrical compositions. From the former, 'Tell Me Why', 'Only Love Can Break Your Heart', 'Birds' and 'I Believe In You' have the insistent melodic qualities brought over from Young's days with Buffalo Springfield. On these and others like 'After The Goldrush', the aforementioned 'Southern Man' and 'Don't Let It Bring You Down', Young's credentials as a writer of substance have never been more evident.

The six-minute 'Southern Man', the title being self-explanatory, is a song that crackles alive with emotion, lines like "*I heard screaming and bullwhips cracking*" jumping with fire on the back on Young's quivering high pitched voice and a paranoiac electric guitar of searing power.

Significantly perhaps, the album ends on one of the simplest songs in the set, 'Cripple Creek Ferry'. Here again Young throws in the sketchiest of images yet against the gentle rhythms and harmonies there's no doubt about the big ferry boat nosing its lazy way through the overhanging trees.

From bullrushes to bullwhips is some range and some mind. ***Nick Logan***

BOB DYLAN
New Morning
CBS



NME, 13 March 1971, page 8

Any utterance from Bob Dylan – especially when contained on an album – causes some sort of excitement and talk of the next LP has led us to believe that it is the be-all-and-end-all of his music. I'm afraid it just isn't – much of it is standard pop that would be totally neglected if any other artist had done it.

The rock content is very good and demonstrates just how far he has come since the early days. Al Kooper (Blood, Sweat & Tears' former member) is present on piano, which Dylan also plays, but there is no indication at present who does what on which track.

The rock content is very good and demonstrates just how far he has come

So 'New Morning' doesn't really live up to Dylan's expected standard. The album is due for CBS release here on November 13, but the company is striving to have it out earlier and has high hopes of it being available in this country before American kids can buy it.

It will undoubtedly sell a lot, but not go down as one of Bob Dylan's best efforts. ***Richard Green***

2 NEW MUSICAL EXPRESS On sale Friday, week ending October 24, 1970

AN NMExclusive interview WITH

A VERY PRIVATE INDIVIDUAL — JAMES TAYLOR

who appears at the Palladium this Sunday

By Allan McDougall

JAMES TAYLOR is a tall, lanky, loping, likeable kind of fellow. But nevertheless, a very private individual. Not the kind of guy you can do a regular kind of interview with.

Not that he's offensively off-putting or nasty. Quite the opposite. It's just that he confesses to have nothing to say when it comes to telling people about himself.

I met him for the first time on Sunday morning, when he flew into London from Vancouver with his good friend Joni Mitchell, with whom he'd just done a concert, and his manager, Peter Asher.

James was pretty tired, and explained: "I've been doing so much travelling recently. Like, last night we were in Vancouver, which is on the West Coast, and before that I was at home in Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, which is in the East. Before that I was shooting the movie ('Two Lane Blacktop', in which James plays the driver of a cross-country dragster) and that took us all over the Midwest — Macon, Georgia; Little Rock, Arkansas; Roswell, Oklahoma, and everywhere like that.

"The movie took about two months and involved working around 13 hours a day, at least."

All of which was enough to convince me that he sure was tired, so I let him be for Sunday, and joined up with him again on Monday at the BBC-TV Centre, where he was shooting an "In Concert" programme for Stanley Dorfmann on BBC-2.

While James was attempting to unwind between rehearsals and the actual filming ("Television makes me real nervous — all those cameras bug the hell out of me"), we talked for a few minutes more. I asked him if he had enjoyed filming "Two Lane Blacktop"?

"Yeah, but it was hard work. Especially doing things over and over, and all the hanging around. Just waiting is also tiring."

Why had he done the movie? Was it a vehicle for getting his music across to a larger audience?

"No. I don't sing in the film at all. And it wasn't anything to do with getting James Taylor across, because I don't play myself."

"It's just that everybody thought it was a good idea to do the film. I didn't know the people involved with it, but I got to know them and they're good dudes."

What really makes James Taylor happy?

"Oh, I like working on my house in Martha's Vineyard. I like being away from cities altogether, although Boston is okay, and so is San Francisco, I guess. I was born in Boston, but we all moved to Carolina when I was three and I lived there until I was 14, when I went to school in New York.

"And I like singing and playing, although sometimes that runs out. I have to play in cities, and colleges in cities, but that's where the people are, so . . ."

Then James went into the TV studio to sing James Taylor, except that he commenced his concert with his own version of: "Messrs. Lennon & McCartney's 'With A Little Help From My Good Friends' which I always open with."

Wearing an old pair of baggy, faded-blue jeans and a shawl-cum-cardigan thing, J.T. mentioned with his single from the "Sweet Baby James" album—"Fire And Rain."

"I wrote it myself, mostly here and mostly in the States."

Then came a very funny take-off of Ray Charles' "Things Go better With Coco-Cola" advert, and a humorous reference to Ray Charles and Coke, which may have to be edited out of the film when it gets screened.

Actually, Taylor opens up more about his music when he has a guitar or a piano under his fingers. He told us that "Sweet Baby James" is a lullaby for his older brother's son, and J.T.'s nephew, James.

And "Steamroller" was written when he was with a New York group, the Flying Machine, in 1968, and all the suburban kids in other groups were trying to be real bluesy with the guitars and amps their parents bought them.

Those kids were writing the heaviest lyric they could think of — like "I'm The Queen Mary, Baby" or "I'm A Ton Of Bricks" — so he had to send that scene up with this song in which he is a Steamroller and a Cement-Mixer and a Napalm Bomb.

After singing for almost an hour, including "Carolina In My Mind" and "Sunny Skies" and other goodies James asked if he's been on for thirty minutes yet. Obviously so, and the audience, had enjoyed themselves a lot.

After the show it was all down to dinner on the Warner Brothers, James' record label, and James told me that sometime he'd like to go up to Scotland.

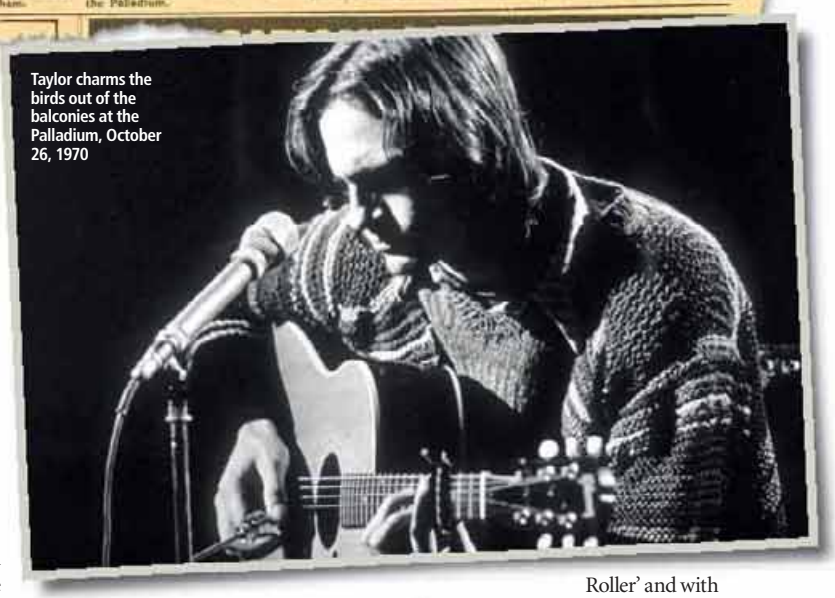
"My great-great-grandparents came from Maryton, which is in County Moray. Up near Aberdeen, I guess. I'd really like to get up there for a time and see where it all began."

In the meantime, James Taylor is looking forward to playing a concert in London on Sunday at the Palladium.

JONI MITCHELL and JAMES TAYLOR pictured on their arrival at London Airport on Sunday.

LISTEN TO OCEAN

TAYLOR MADE TRIUMPH



Taylor charms the birds out of the balconies at the Palladium, October 26, 1970

MM, 31 October 1970, page 22

A young man and his guitar with songs about love and the world – the way he sees it – can be the most crippling experience outside of Rugby football. Yet James Taylor makes the experience painless. He has an extremely pleasant voice. No harsh overtones, yelps, or anguised cries of pain, remorse, anger, despair and frustration here, only the calm, wry humour of a chap who has seen it all... or most.

James has had quite a hard climb to the top. He freely admits he spent some time in an institution from which stems the song 'Knocking Around The Zoo'. He makes reference to his early days singing white blues in frenetic New York groups. Now he can afford to laugh gently about those times and mutter an amused "Shucks!"

He has swiftly established himself with a coterie of admirers who react to each song with gasps of pleasurable anticipation. At the London Palladium on Sunday, he held an enthusiastic audience with a gentle and entertaining set accompanied solely by his own more than competent acoustic guitar playing, and slightly less than competent grand piano work.

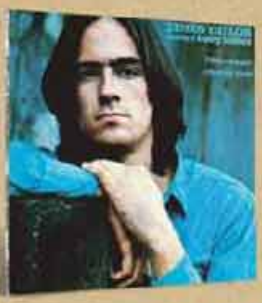
> His stage manner was easy, casual and cool and girls tittered at his little asides

His stage manner was easy, casual and cool and girls tittered at his little asides. In the warmth of the old theatre filled with memories of pantomimes of our youth, one half expected the Widow Twankey to make an appearance and it even seemed like a *Humpty Dumpty* audience – happy and quick to respond. "I wish I had something funny to say," said James in his white Chinese laundry shirt, possibly borrowed from the *Aladdin* props. He recalled his blues-bashing past with the humourous 'Steam Roller' and with eyebrows fluttering gave a perfectly straight reading to the incredible lyrics of Merle Haggard's anti-hippie song, a cue for much disbelieving laughter. He sang the excellent 'Fire And Rain', one of his own little gems, and played an instrumental 'Greensleeves'.

There was a sense of completeness about his performance. It was full and satisfying, as was the opening set by Matthews' Southern Comfort, who impressed with their vocal harmonies, the steel guitar of Gordon Huntley and Ian Matthews' own charm and feeling for a song. ***Chris Welch***

REX FEATURES/MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES-REFERNS/HENRY DILTZ-CORBIS

JAMES TAYLOR
Sweet Baby James
Warner Reprise



MM, 4 April 1970, page 26

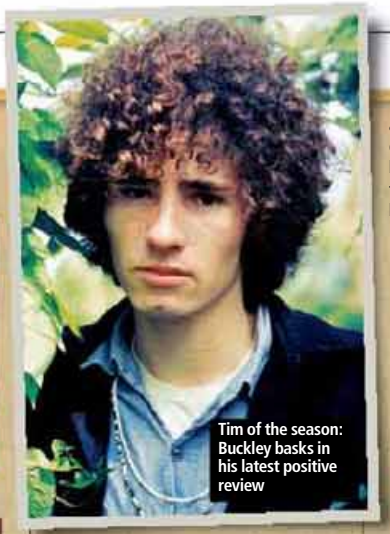
James is not a great blues singer – or country singer. But somehow, the English chap with an adopted American accent (for rock'n'roll purposes), has made an extremely enjoyable album. The atmosphere is relaxed, unpretentious, and has the added bonus of the guitars of Danny Kootch, Red Rhodes and Mr Taylor himself, which sound pretty good in stereo. A typical song is 'Country Road', with one of those band type backbeats. Taylor's lyrics are thoughtfully enclosed in a leaflet, and he wrote all the numbers except Stephen Foster's 'Oh Susannah', given tasteful treatment. Paul Asher's production has ensured a rich backing which never becomes too obtrusive. A favourite track of this reviewer is 'Blossom', which could make a single.
While not exactly country music, it could perhaps be described as Green Belt Rock. ***Chris Welch***

THE BAND
Stage Fright
Captiol

NME, 10 October 1970, page 8

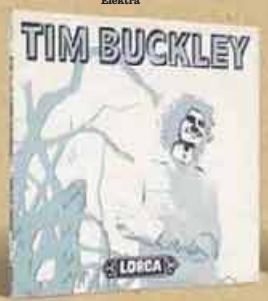
Wow! What musical talent these boys own between them. Country rock seems to be a popular style of music at the moment but The Band are the originators of this clear-cut funky sound.
'Stage Fright' is an incredible example of good writing, good singing and superb production blending together to supply a must for the record collection. This album will appeal to anyone who takes the trouble to listen to it, no matter what kind of music they prefer.
It is difficult to pick out best tracks because they are all so good, but my favourites are 'Strawberry Wine', 'Daniel And The Sacred Harp' and their current single 'Time To Kill'. ***Gordon Coxhill***

An incredible example of good writing, good singing and superb production



Tim of the season: Buckley basks in his latest positive review

TIM BUCKLEY
Lorca
Elektra



MM, 14 November 1970, page 17

This is presumably Buckley's last album for Elektra, being recorded (so I'm told) at same time as 'Happy/Sad' and before his first Straight album, 'Blue Afternoon'. It's also, shamefully, my introduction to him. There's a lot of 'Astral Weeks' in the two tracks, 'Lorca' and 'Anonymous Proposition', which make up the first side; not in a plagiaristic way, but in terms of feeling. Both share the sense of being inner-directed monologues, overheard and indistinct, but still communicating alienation and a state of disengagement which is somewhat past despair. In musical terms, these two tracks depend on a complex under-pinning of acoustic guitars, electric piano and pipe organ, and (on '...Proposition') a use of string bass. Both have an extremely free, loose texture, the musicians filling in the gaps between Buckley's terse phrases at will. The result is very strong indeed, highly experimental although still retaining conventional sonorities, and is one of the most adventurous sides I've heard in the rock context. The second side, with three longish tracks, is slightly more orthodox, and 'Driftin'' is particularly superb, with Buckley stretching the high notes over a casually rolling guitar phrase. The overall mood of the music is very "down", but I'm convinced that this is an important album, and I look forward to discovering the rest of Mr Buckley's work. ***Richard Williams***

CAT STEVENS
Tea For The Tillerman
Island

MM, 14 November 1970, page 16

This is the kind of album which is hard to put down but equally hard to get excited about. Like his last one, this is pleasant, relaxed and tasteful. Cat writes thoughtful, attractive songs with un-clichéd lyrics, and avoids being pedantic or bombastic even on "message" songs like 'Where Do The Children Play?' and 'Father And Son'. The best-known song here is 'Wild World', a recent hit for Jimmy Cliff, and there are several just as good. The only fault with the album, excellent though it is, is that it lacks energy and tension. It's a bit too low-key, and I can't see myself wanting to play it much again. ***Alan Lewis***

STEPHEN STILLS
Stephen Stills
Atlantic

NME, 21 November 1970, page 8

I seem to have spent a lot of time in the last year and a half in recording studios with Stephen Stills. I sat through a lot of the first Crosby, Stills & Nash LP, and through even more of 'Déja Vu' at Wally Heider's studios in Hollywood.
Then, early this year, I went to Island studios in London to see and hear what was going on with Still's first solo album. I loved what I heard, so it was a pleasure when Stephen called me and invited me down to his Surrey home to do an exclusive review for *NME*, and after do some general Sunday-in-the-country hanging out.
The solo album is better than I can remember. I'd stick my neck out and say that it will in time be classed as one of the all-time great records. It's right up there alongside 'Sgt Pepper's...' and 'Tommy' and that first magic CS&N album. The only complaint I would offer in writing about Stephen Stills is that I have difficulty in describing the sensation I felt as the very last chord poundered out of the stereo. Shivers down the backbone? Spiders on the shoulderbone? Anyway, it is fantastic! ***Allan McDougall***

I can't describe the sensation I felt as the last chord poundered out of the stereo

Stills, Colorado, September 1970: "I'm sure that red giraffe over there is following me..."

LAURA'S LONDON TRIUMPH

LAURA NYRO
Christmas And The Beads of Sweat
CBS

MM 30 January 1971, page 22

Each of Laura Nyro's four albums has had its own distinct personality. 'Christmas' is different again; for a start she's accompanied, on the first side, by the brilliant Muscle Shoals band. The fact that other names include Duane Allman and that production is credited to Felix Cavaliere and Arif Mardin might lead one to expect some kind of soulful, funky music. In fact the essence hasn't changed at all, and Laura (or rather Mardin) uses the assets of these musicians to serve her approach, rather than becoming subservient to them. The result is probably her best album to date, although it's difficult to talk about her in such comparative terms. Many of the songs create an impression/illusion of greater happiness than before, like the opening 'Brown Earth' (positively euphoric) and the gorgeously impressionistic 'Upstairs By A Chinese Lamp'. But underneath most of the songs there's still leitmotif of self-destruction, like 'Map To The Treasure': "*My pretty medicine man/Got pretty medicine in his hand.*" But perhaps the best track, overall, is 'When I Was Freeport And You Were The Main Drag', which has wisely been released as a single in the States. It's in her tradition of singable songs ('Wedding Bell', 'Stoney End',) and Mardin's arrangement is the soul of tactful emphasis. The lovely cover portrait sets the seal on a magnificent record.
Richard Williams

Underneath most of the songs there's still a leitmotif of self-destruction

MM, 13 February 1971, page 22

When an audience can greet Laura Nyro the way they did at the Royal Festival Hall, London, on Saturday night, then I've got to admit it's getting better, it's getting better all the time.

To me, she symbolises the breadth of pop music – the way it can embrace such widely disparate performers. Nyro is at one end of the spectrum, and she has it all sewn up.

There can be no question that the concert was a personal triumph for her. True, the audience was on her side from the start, and would probably have applauded had she just sat there mumbling and never sang or played a note. But a large part of her achievement was the conquering of her extreme pre-concert nervousness, which manifested itself in her rather unsteady gait and occasional tight half-smile.

The first strident notes of 'Stoney End' though, dispelled all doubts in the hearts of both her and the audience. A couple of minutes later, no one present could have argued against the assertion that she is certainly more effective live than on record; the arrangements for voice and piano are more sharply focused, the emotional registrations more exact, than the recorded orchestral treatments.

She was an extraordinary sight, wearing an off the-shoulder Spanish dress, her hair floating down to the piano stool as she leaned back ecstatically at the end of each number while the spotlights dimmed to a pin-point and died. It was a superbly theatrical performance, yet one never felt any sense of falseness because the music is true and the trappings somehow enhance that honesty rather than give the lie to it.

Nyro is at one end of the spectrum, and has it all sewn up

She gave us 11 of her own compositions, all familiar from the albums, outstanding among which were 'Timer' for its vocal virtuosity; 'Been On A Train', for its dark autobiographical melancholy; 'Emmie', for its sense of personal loss; 'Map To The Treasure', for a stunning display of highly percussive pianistics; and the climactic 'Christmas In My Soul', which she delivered as if possessed by benign spirits.

Unexpectedly, she also read a brief poem called 'Coal Truck' which emphasised her way with words, and her final encore took the form of a medley of two old favourites; 'He's Sure The Boy I Love' and 'Spanish Harlem', bending them to her will and making them sound as though she'd written both.

The concert was opened by Jackson Browne, who used to compose and play guitar for Nico. His warm voice, rough but driving guitar and piano and sad songs made a strong impression before the interval but the first glimpse of Miss Nyro drove all else out of everyone's head. It was a most memorable occasion.
Richard Williams

Laura Nyro in concert 1971

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVE–REDFERNS/ELLIOT LANDY–REDFERNS

Laura Nyro: "positively euphoric", unlike her stylist...

Fotheringay pictured in 1970: they were over by Christmas

FOTHERINGAY SPLIT

The folk supergroup decide to call it a day, but deny that lack of success was the cause

MM, 9 January 1971, page 1

Fotheringay, one of the great white hopes of 1970, has split barely 12 months after its creation. The decision was joint, and was made just before Christmas.

There will be a special farewell concert at London's Queen Elizabeth Hall on January 30.

Sandy Denny told *MM* this week that her main reason for wanting the band dissolved was so that she could make her first solo album.

"I've been wanting to do it for a really long time, but I don't think I was ready before," she said. "Because I was in the group I didn't have the time to make it and we

"I've been wanting to do a solo album for a long time, but wasn't ready" Sandy Denny

weren't a rich band. We couldn't afford to take time off from being on the road.

"I'm not quite sure yet how long I can be without a group. Apart from the album, I don't really know what I'm going to do."

The album, she said, would be started soon. She had composed four songs already.

Was it true, as rumours suggested that the band split because it could not get any gigs? "No, not at all," she protested. "We've got loads of gigs coming up that we've had to cancel because of this decision."

Trevor Lucas, singer/guitarist with the band, plans to learn record production and engineering. He will continue to write songs both with Sandy and by himself, and hopes to make a solo album.

He said: "It was getting a bit pressured for all of us. It got to the point where there was such a lot of work and so many different things happening that I didn't have time to relax."

Drummer Gerry Conway and bassist Pat Donaldson plan to continue playing sessions and concerts. "The music scene," said Conway, "is now turning more and more to people playing not in one group but with other musicians."

Lead guitarist Jerry Donahue will also work freelance for a time, but is considering offers to join other groups.

Lucas stressed that the decision to split was amicable and came from within the band.

But Tim Sharman, a friend of Fotheringay told *MM* he believed they had parted because of a lack of venues, management hassles, and a lack of public reaction.

Karl Dallas, writing in *MM* in November, commented on Fotheringay's failure to live up to their early promise, their lack of fire, and their failure to gel completely.

"What's going to happen to Fotheringay?" he asked.

VAN MORRISON
His Band And The Street Choir
Warner Bros

MM, 30 January 1971, page 22

I heard 'Domino', sighed inwardly, and thought I knew that everything was gonna be all right. As a worshipper at the shrines of Them, 'Astral Weeks', and 'Moondance', it was important for it to be so, even more when I know that this band is the best live unit I've ever seen.

Why, then, is so much of 'His Band And The Street Choir' vaguely disturbing, even moving towards disappointment? There's nothing "wrong" with any of the 12 tracks, as such; I just have the feeling that Morrison is maybe too relaxed, too happy.

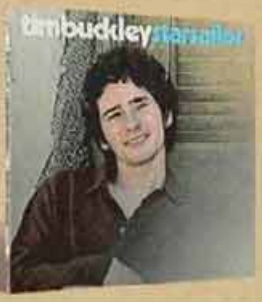
Van Morrison with wife Janet Planet and daughter Shana in Woodstock

The sleeve illustrations depict the singer and band in commune-style scenes, surrounded by wives and kids, and the album reflects this loose, easy mood. The songs don't snap like they used to, his voice stretches but doesn't bite, and there's a lack of the terseness which made him so attractive. Apart from that, the music has much to recommend it. Van seems to be delving back into early R&B (maybe he never left it). 'Domino' is a small masterpiece, based around a Motown guitar riff. Among my favourites is 'Crazy Face', which almost seems to hark back to 'Astral Weeks' in mood. The humorous scat riffing of 'Blue Money' is quite diverting, too. In fact the more I listen to this album, the more I get out of it. I still have definite reservations, when compared to with his earlier masterpieces, but anyone who dug the latter to any extent will want this.

There's nothing 'wrong' with it as such; I just have the feeling that Morrison is too relaxed

Richard Williams

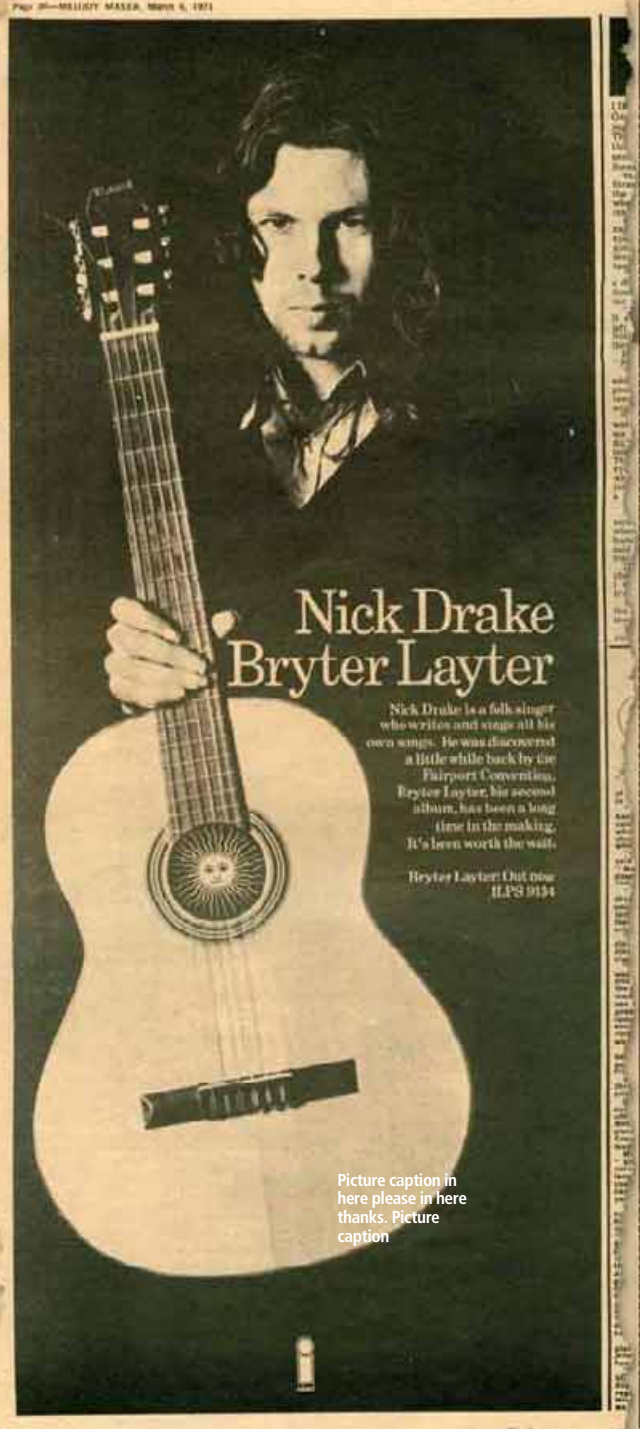
TIM BUCKLEY
Starsailor
Straight



Disc and Music Echo 13 February 1971, page 18

'Starsailor' from Tim Buckley is very strange. Most of the songs are sung and played in minor scale sequences and don't sound altogether tuneful. Other tracks have a suppressed violence in them, totally unlike his previous work.

'Song To The Siren' is beautiful and has a peaceful backing music, set to sad words. It's quite a relief to reach 'Jungle Fire' which is on more familiar ground and breaks into rock. The entire album is unsettling, but gives the impression that all will be revealed after listening to it over a longer period.


Nick Drake
Bryter Layter
Nick Drake is a folk singer who writes and sings all his own songs. He was discovered a little while back by the Fairport Convention. Bryter Layter, his second album, has been a long time in the making. It's been worth the wait.
Bryter Layter! Out now
ILPS 9134

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GRAHAM NASH
Songs For Beginners
Atlantic

NME, 5 June 1971, page 7

"I am a simple man/So I sing a simple song/I've never been so much in love/And never hurt so bad at the same time," sings Graham Nash on his excellent premier solo collection. In doing so he states the main theme that prevails throughout the album. Though a majority of the material pivots around the subject of love – lost and found, past, present and perhaps future – Nash doesn't wallow in self-pity, pathos or hide under the doom clouds of despair.

Graham Nash has come to terms with his life, with the result that 'Songs For Beginners' has evolved as a most tasteful anthology, light, straight and ever so simple. It is in the charm of its basic simplicity that this album has succeeded. With a minimum of production and a smatter of "names", Graham has conceived an album which is perfect for the summer months and one which could notch up the same kind of sales figures as Neil Young's 'After The Gdldrush'.

All of the 11 cuts are short and precise, and in being so they sustain the listener's undivided attention through both sides (own up, how many albums can you say that about?).

At no time are any of the tracks, over-embellished or drawn out... self-control has been observed and artistic discretion maintained. Far removed from the CSN&Y format, the only noticeable characteristic to be detected, on a couple of tracks, is that Nash is prone to adopt a Lennon-esque timing in the delivery and pauses in certain vocal stanzas. As both Lennon and Nash are first generation nasal rocksters from the same area of North-West England, perhaps it is just a natural trait, nevertheless it enhances the mood of the particular tracks. ***Roy Carr***

Nash doesn't wallow in self-pity, pathos or hide under the doom clouds of despair

DAVID CROSBY
If Only I Could Remember My Name
Atlantic

NME, 3 April 1971, page 6

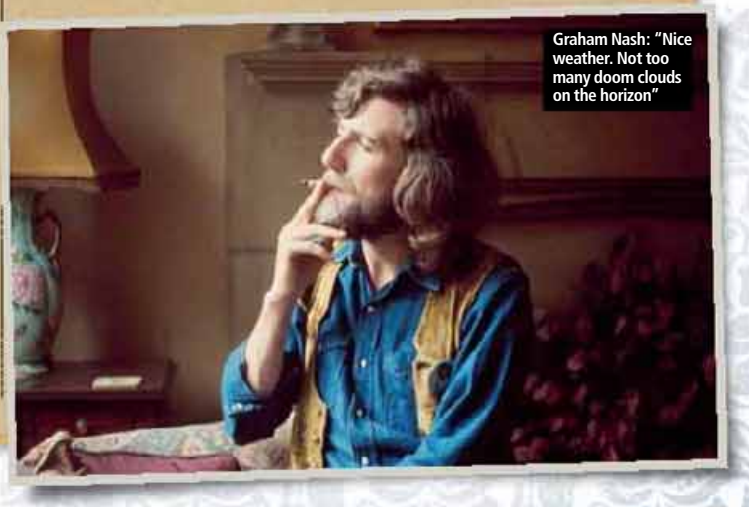
I suppose there are those among us who have still to realise the magnitude of David Crosby, Stephen Stills, Graham Nash and Neil Young... collectively and as soloists. Having paid their respective dues with Buffalo Springfield, The Byrds and The Hollies, they now stand among the very finest writers/performers. In a consumer industry which pivots around "here-today-gone-tomorrow" music, the songs of CSN&Y will remain as being reflective of the quality music of the '70s. Prior to the unit reforming for concerts and recordings, the interim period has been laid aside for these Titans to indulge in a spate of "own thinging." To our delight, Neil has produced his classic 'After The Goldrush', and Steve has displayed his personality in an all-star gathering. Now, old ancient-face David Crosby has assembled his closest musical friends to enhance his debut album. Retaining the basic spirit of some of his CSN&Y albums, this particular set seems to hover in a singular mood of lethargic tranquility. It may not have the immediacy of the Stills and Young collages, but after continued re-plays it emits a slowly rotating charisma of sustained calm and peacefulness. My introduction was early on a warm sunny Sunday morning, with the green fields and scurrying squirrels acting as a pleasing visual backdrop, which may give you some small insight into the mood.

Though none of the tracks give individual performing credits (a pity), the collective personnel includes Nash, Young, Joni Mitchell, Grateful Dead sidekicks Jerry Garcia, Phil Lash, Bill Kreuzmann and Mickey Hart, Jefferson Airplane members Grace Slick, Jack Casady, Paul Kantner and Jorma Kaukonen, plus Santana sidemen Gregg Rolie and Michael Shrieve. ***Roy Carr***

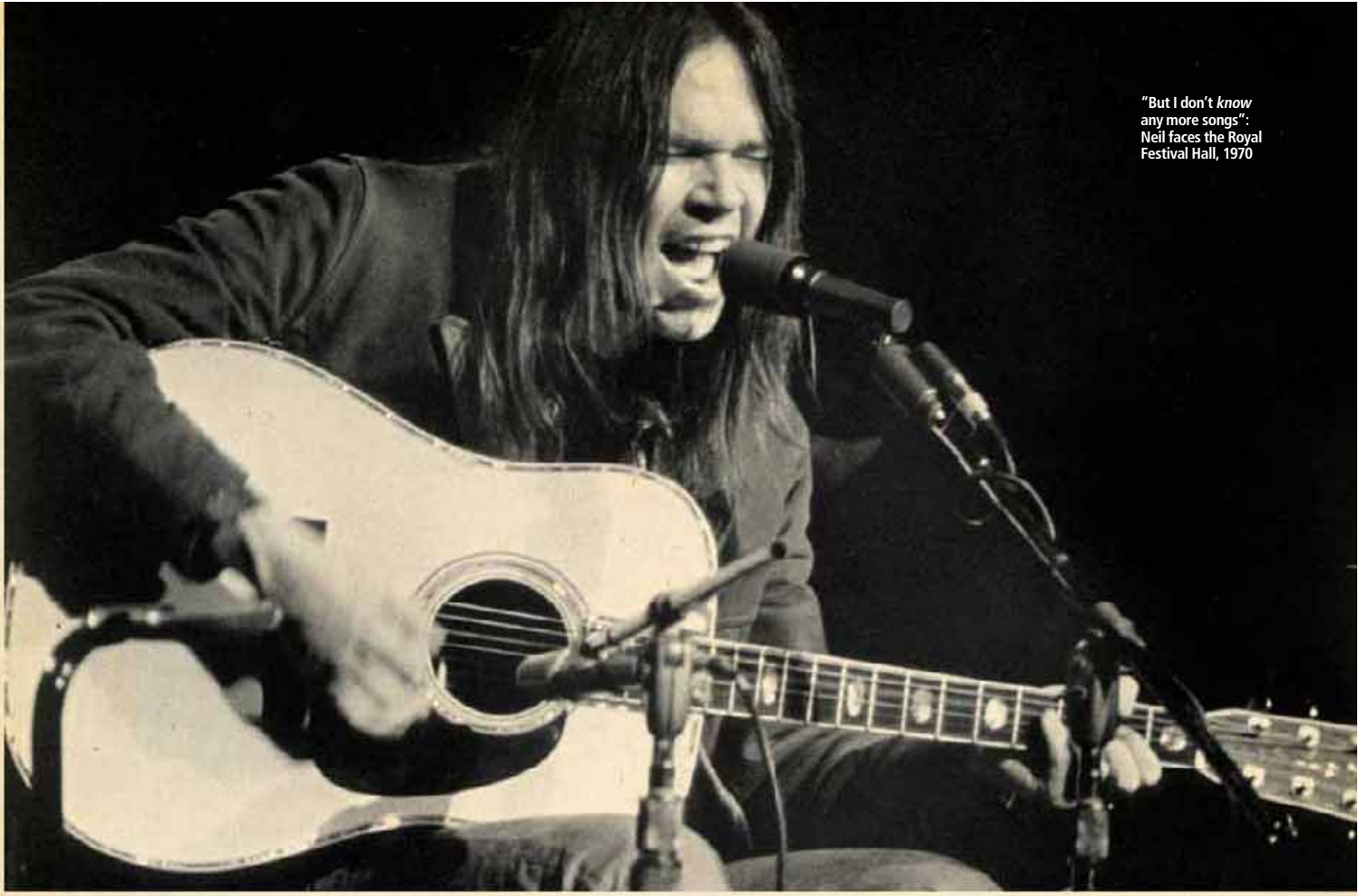
NICK DRAKE
Bryter Layter
Island

Disc, 13 March 1971, page 19

Nick Drake was discovered by Fairport Convention some time ago and 'Bryter Layter' is his second album. He sings his own very personal songs in a strange, deep Vaseline voice, probably more suited to crooning, accompanied at times by a really funky backing. There's an amazing array of faces featured – Dave Pegg, Richard Thompson, Dave Mattacks, Lyn Dobson playing flute on the title track, Chris McGregor and John Cale on lovely things like viola, harpsichord and celeste. An extraordinarily good, hefty folk album.



Graham Nash: "Nice weather. Not too many doom clouds on the horizon"



"But I don't *know* any more songs": Neil faces the Royal Festival Hall, 1970

NEIL GAVE EVERYTHING – AND THEY ASKED FOR MORE

MM, 6 March 1971, page 18

"'Oh Lonesome Me,' Neil…"

"Uh… I can't do that without the band."

" 'Southern Man,' Neil…"

" Uh… listen, I've got a bunch of stuff to sing for you. I… I came prepared folks. This is a big gig for me, y'know."

It turned out to be a big gig for everyone. I wasn't going to go at first, because it looked like being the sort of concert that EVERBODY attends. You know, everybody who's anybody… I mean what a DRAG. But good sense prevailed, and was rewarded by as fine a concert as anyone could have wished.

The inevitable comparison was, I suppose, with the Dylan of '65, and if it does nothing else, such an exercise at least delineates the changes in attitude towards rock performers. Whereas the old Dylan was magnetic, hypnotic, a far away figure who mesmerised, Neil Young at the Royal Festival Hall last Saturday was an old friend come to sing us a few songs. The sense of occasion, so strong that it almost curled into the nostrils, was created not by the performer, but by the audience and their expectations. In concert, by himself and with only a guitar and piano to play, the essential simplicity of Neil's songs is what's so striking. He deals with very personal subjects, in a tightly-focused way which has no truck with abstract imagery. His words, like his tunes, are concise to the point of saying what he wants them to say and then stopping. Not many people can do that these days.

He sang many new songs: the most unusual perhaps, was 'A Man Needs A Maid', which he'll record with the London Symphony Orchestra this week. He used the piano on this, and behind those crashing climaxes one could already hear Jack Nitschze's arrangement for the LSO. There were two beautiful songs about his new ranch, another called 'Dance Dance Dance' which was a light Cajun-inspired piece to jig around to, and the title song of his next LP, 'Harvest', which had a graceful melody strongly reminiscent of the old English folk song, 'Mary Hamilton'.

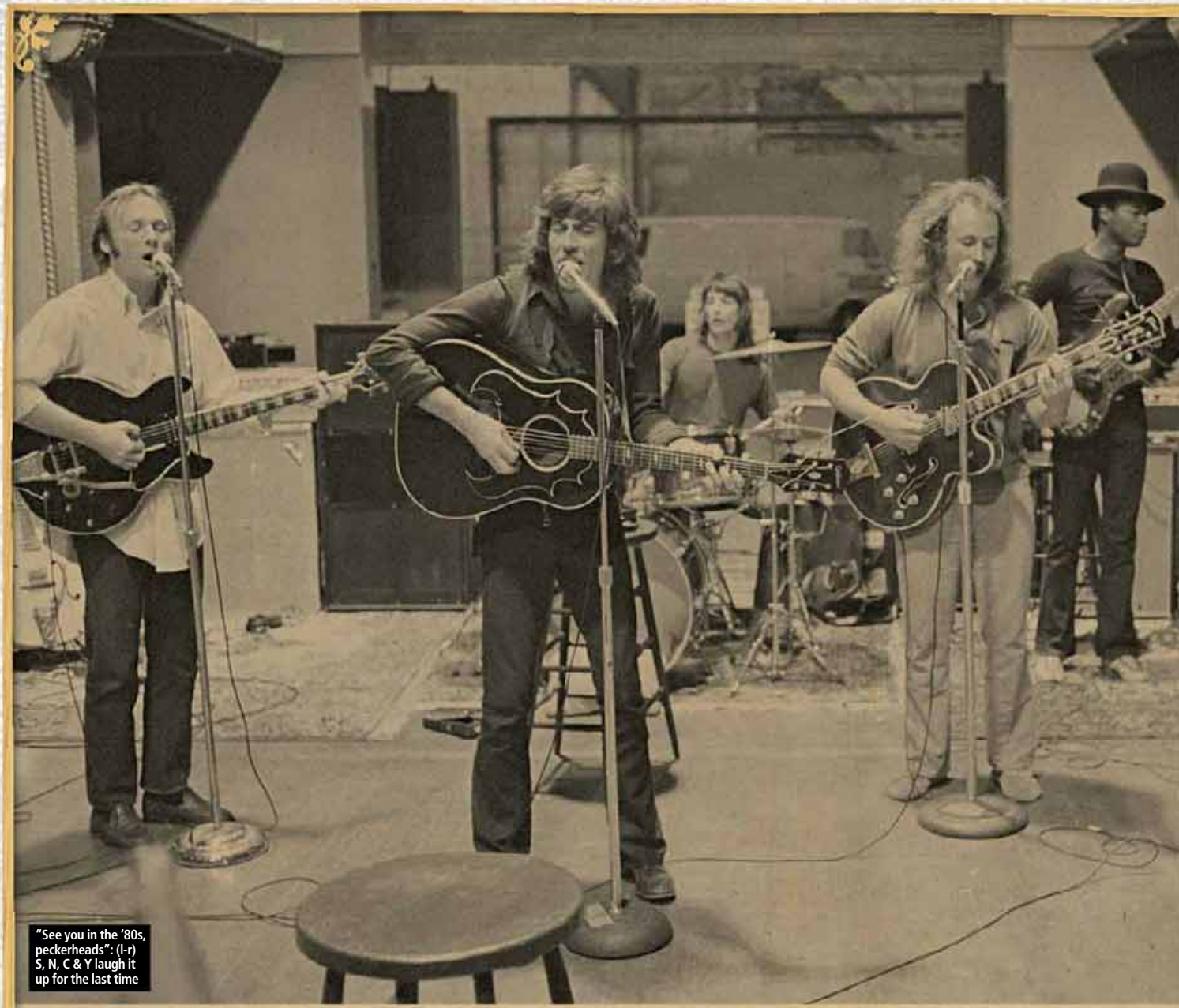
In concert, by himself and with only a guitar and piano, the essential simplicity of Neil's songs is what's so striking

But there was much that was familiar, too: 'Tell Me Why', 'Only Love Can Break Your Heart', 'Don't Let It Bring You Down', 'Ohio'. Oddly, most of these sounded even better than the recordings, for Neil's unusual technique allows him to draw from the guitar a very full sound; on 'Cowgirl In The Sand', for instance, he even managed to accompany his own brief but typical solo flurries, and the effect was almost as driving as the recorded version.

The key songs were 'The Loner' and a new one, 'The Needle And The Damage Done'. Both are about friends, viewed with a sad but uncloying sympathy. When he reached the verse about Judy Collins in 'The Loner', Young seemed suddenly traumatised; his voice dropped, yet became charged with the deepest emotion, and the song became really real. 'The Needle...' is about the friends he's watched wreck themselves on heroin, and the high clarity of his voice hurt. It was followed by 'Nowadays Clancy Can't Even Sing', Springfield's first single which built a startling momentum into a brilliant performance.

He left, but the audience bayed for more so he came back and sang 'Dance Dance Dance'. They wouldn't stop, though, and reached that awful point where they were really applauding themselves for being so COOOOL, stupidly demanding more from an artist who'd already given everything. Unwisely he came back looking rather surly and sang 'Expecting To Fly', fast. It had been a wonderful concert but the audience had come damn near to ruining it. ***Richard Williams***

MICHAEL PUTLAND-RETNA/STARFILE



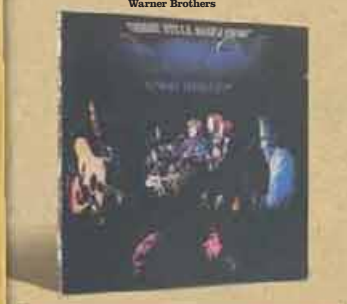
"See you in the '80s, peckerheads": (l-r) S, N, C & Y laugh it up for the last time

HENRY DILTZ–CORBIS/PICTORIAL PRESS

CROSBY, STILLS, NASH & YOUNG

4 Way Street

Warner Brothers



NME, 24 April 1971, page 15

We've been promised this double-set for many moons, but various internal conflicts and continuous re-mixing have been the prime obstacle in its delay. Yet, it has to be said that this is the most worthwhile acquisition. If only for the fact that Neil Young unwittingly dominates the proceedings to the extent that at times he almost re-routes the traffic to make it into a one-way street. One can almost envisage his "friends" standing back in complete admiration for his performances; most notable being 'Cowgirl In The Sand' and 'Southern Man', the latter being the standout track. Though you can draw comparisons with the studio cuts, a few benefit from the naturalness of being performed before an appreciative gathering. At times even the most intense song takes on a relaxed casualness in its stripped-down interpretation.

Musical imperfections, human errors and obvious clangers are to be detected, but such is their artistry that it enhances as opposed to widening the quality of performance. For over-indulgence in the studio can at times lead to an undertone of sterility. Split into two contrasting sections, the first album is the "wooden" set, in that it is all acoustic with solo performances all round. Track by track the set opens with 'On The Way Home', the old Buffalo Springfield hit which Neil also uses as the introduction to his solo concerts, and immediately he asserts his position as one of this year's artists supreme.

'Teach Your Children', the familiar Nash song, retains its magic despite the lack of musical support. 'Triad' and 'The Lee Shore' are two moody cameos from Mr C and coming one on top of the other they do slow the pace, mainly due to their very obscure melody lines. 'Chicago', a Nash song dedicated to Mayor Daley, has strong political overtones, and as it was performed in the city of its title has even more impetus.

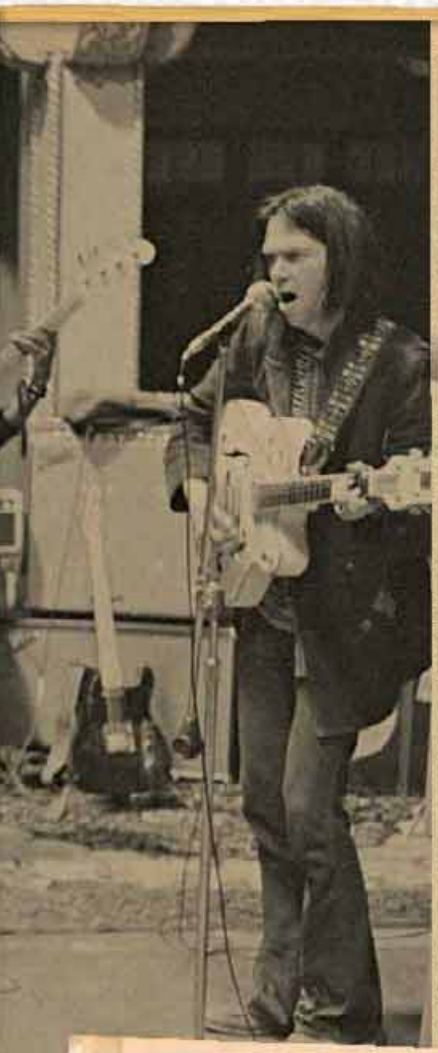
'Right Between The Eyes' opens side two and it is one of "Willi's" introverted songs of love, as opposed to being a love song. Beautiful lyrics.

'Cowgirl In The Sand' showcases Neil Young at his very best; while 'Don't Let It Bring You Down', another Young original from his 'Gold Rush' collection is equally as good. '49 Bye-Byes' is Steve Stills' first contribution, which starts slowly then doubles the tempo to include 'For What It's Worth'. I prefer the deep brooding Buffalo Springfield original. 'Love The One You're With', Stills recent hit single, is a fine enthusiastic closer. 'Pre-Road Downs' opens the second album in a rush of electricity more evocative of the first CS&N album and secured their musical immortality. 'Long Time Gone' is definitely one of Crosby's better compositions with dark rumbling guitar support. Good passionate vocal. 'Southern Man' is, to reiterate, the best cut on the set.

One can almost imagine Young's "friends" standing back in admiration

Young completely takes over the group for this extended track which stretches to 13-minutes plus. Drawing every ounce of strength from the other musicians he has preserved a classic performance. 'Ohio', Young's politico anthem, maintains the same high-tension which prevailed in the previous number. 'Carry On', Stills' 13-minute cut, more than demonstrates what a vastly underrated guitarist he is. 'Find The Cost Of Freedom' is the closer and the group's acoustic encore. And a song which Stills originally wrote as the epilogue for the *Easy Rider* movie.

Roy Carr



LEONARD COHEN
Songs Of Love And Hate
CBS

NME, 22 May 1971, page 7

What a depressing guy this Cohen is! He sings as if he's a bad loser at a poker game, or as if it is an effort to get the words out. All in a dull monotone.

But he does let you hear the words he sings and if you listen carefully and think a bit you can get the message. The music behind him is from his group The Army, and from strings and horns arranged by Paul Buckmaster and from the Corona Children's Choir, in London.

'Dress Rehearsal Rag' is a morbid piece about bad memories and 'Diamonds In The Mine' is quite tuneful until Cohen starts to sing! 'Love Calls You By Your Name' is low-key self-pity and 'Famous Blue Raincoat' a study in desperation. 'Joan Of Arc' dwells on her fate in the mind of Cohen. I found the album a thoroughly depressing experience and if you want to be depressed, this is for you. ***Allan Evans***

What a depressing guy this Cohen is! If you want to be depressed, this is for you

CAROLE KING
Tapestry
A&M

MM, 22 May 1971, page 22

How strange, and yet how pleasing, is the recent ascendancy to stature of a girl who teased us all as teenyboppers with simple songs like 'It Might As Well Rain Until September'. Carole King is ten years older now, but her songs are younger. Her last solo album, 'Writer', was a side road; this new one is a motorway, because it's difficult to turn off once you've started. Understatement in performance has a lot to do with Carole's charisma, but the words are powerful, too. How else would she secure the friendly co-operation of James Taylor on acoustic guitar; brilliant guitarist Danny Kootch and Merry Clayton on background vocals? The beauty of King's writing lies in her rare ability to be sentimental without even bordering on the maudlin. At a time when California's music is getting embarrassingly introspective, Carole seems able to articulate other people's emotions and physical frustrations: 'So Far Away' is a simple, touching song echoing the ache of loneliness. 'You've Got A Friend' is in the same league; 'Will You Love Me Tomorrow?' is rich, meaningfully sung, with backing vocals by Joni Mitchell and James Taylor. 'Tapestry' is an engagingly poetic performance, though the lyrics are a bit strident. This is small criticism of a magnificent record which elevates Carole King to the Joni Mitchell division. For rock romantics, an essential album that transcends all the barriers. ***Ray Coleman***

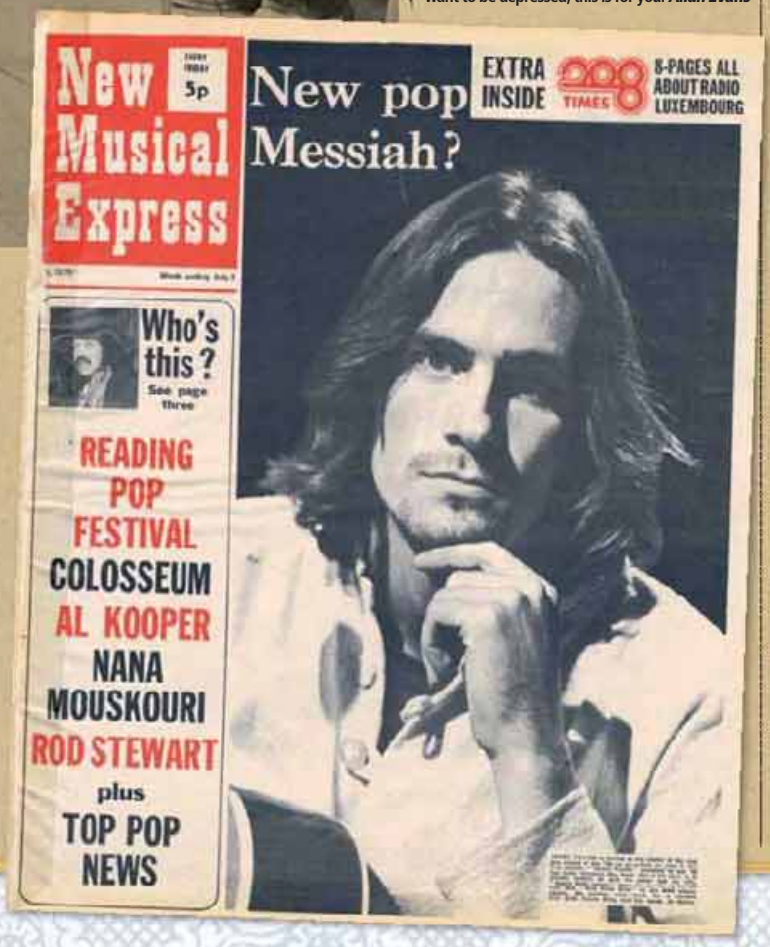
JAMES TAYLOR
Mud Slide Slim And The Blue Horizon
Warner Brothers

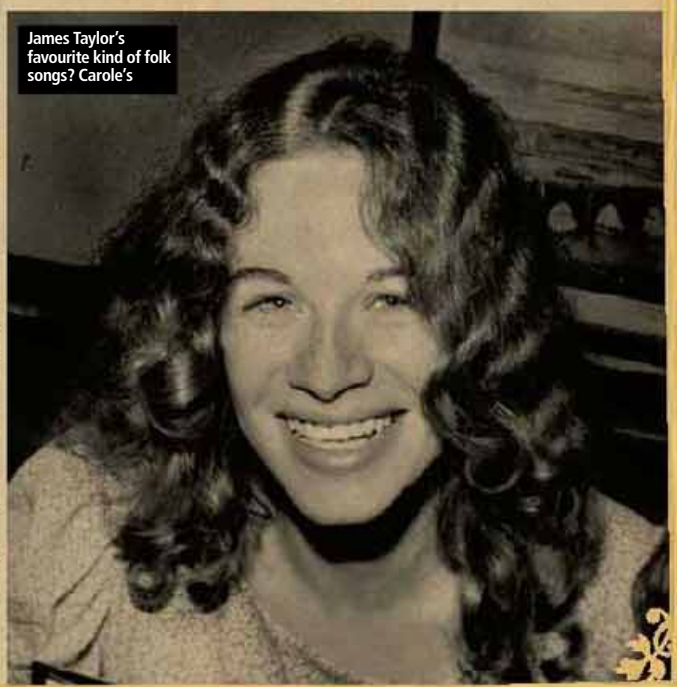
MM, 1 May 1971, page 16

When a musician becomes as fashionable as James Taylor, he is in danger of sounding like a parody of himself. Stylistically, this rush-released album is no great departure from his last; and while the songs are rich in words and moods it strikes the Taylor admirer, on first hearing, as being rather too passive.

But then, melancholia is James' kick, and we should perhaps expect no more from him than a collection of fine songs, simply constructed in that observant, poetic manner. James is kept company by some notable notables: Joni Mitchell sings with him on 'Long Ago And Far Away', and 'Love Has Brought Me Around', while Carole King, as well as writing one of the tracks, lends an effective piano to several others. Taylor is rarely credited sufficiently for his acoustic guitar work: rarely can a man who relies on his songs and voice complement these with such a warm instrumental touch.

So what of James' songs? It's strange that people read mystical messages in his stories. The overriding communication is one of doleful despair, heavily introspective and providing an occasional insight into his desperate loneliness. 'Places In My Past', and 'Hey Mister, That's Me Up On The Jukebox' stand out as vintage Taylor, one shy man with a guitar and some incisive stories worth re-telling. It's an endearing record, and though not startlingly original, it does enhance his stature as a writer and musician. ***Ray Coleman***





James Taylor's favourite kind of folk songs? Carole's

JONI MITCHELL
Blue
Reprise

NME, 10 July 1971, page 7

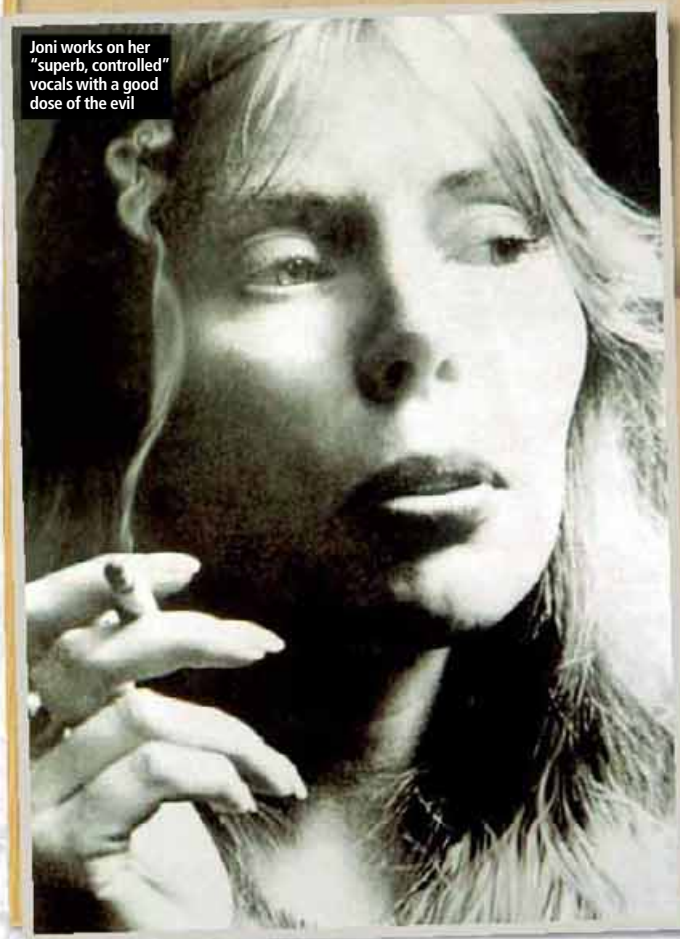
Poor put-upon Joni, her heart on her sleeve. "*I've gone and lost the best baby that I ever had*" she sings in 'River', returning to a recurrent theme. Yet still she's the Woodstock girl with Woodstock hope – hardly a liberationist but with such dignity. The dreamer in 'The Last Time I Saw Richard': "*All good dreamers pass this way some day/Hidin' behind bottles in dark cafes*" We should all know about those "*dark cafes*".

Blue is the beautiful Joni's fourth album and possibly her finest. Yes, certainly her finest when you consider that there are at least four compositions in this collection that could contend as the best ever Joni Mitchell song. It ought to have been 'California' – in which Joni may have written the definite in a long rock tradition, the yearning-for-home song – and maybe it still is, though my enjoyment of the 'Blue' performance has to be tempered by several hearings of this particular composition during the lady's last time in London. Listen to the chorus line "*Oh it gets so lonely*", Sneeky Pete Kleinow's steel guitar echoing the sentiment in an incisive wail, and, of course, to the chorus where in a flash of inspiration, Joni summarises all her feelings in the thought that she'd be so pleased to get home she would "*even kiss a Sunset pig*", ie for those who can't work it out, a member of the California constabulary.

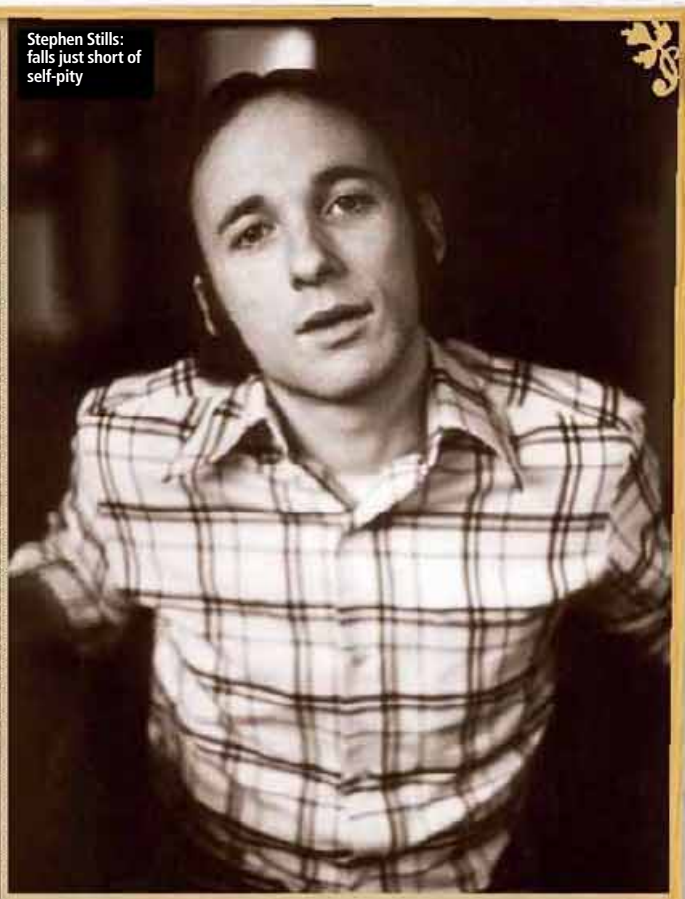
The album is rich in such poetic imagery, a lyrical strength unequalled certainly among her female contemporaries. Hers is a quality that combines the art of the poet with the documentary-like directness of the best of rock lyric writing, vis-á-vis the attention to detail in 'The Last Time I Saw Richard'… the quarter in the Wurlitzer, the barmaid in fishnet stockings and a bow tie… and the "*pretty people reading* Rolling Stone, *reading* Vogue" in 'California'. And the poetry: like in 'A Case Of You' where her lover is in her blood and she could "*drink a case of you, darling, and still be on my feet*".

'A Case Of You' is the second of the four contenders for the best Mitchell song. The others are 'Carey' and the previously mentioned 'River'. 'Carey' has Joni on dulcimer with the tale of her life in the caves of the Greek Island of Mattalla and her visits with friends to the Mermaid Café. 'River' is more melancholy. "*I made my baby cry*" sings Joni, wishing for a river she could skate away on. Vocally, the singer is superb, and always in control of the sentiment, accompanying herself either on piano, guitar or dulcimer with tasteful support on various tracks. 'All I Want', 'This Flight Tonight', the joyous 'My Old Man', the more melancholy 'Little Green' and 'Blue', the latter with its uncharacteristic piano construction, complete a set brimful of Mitchell class.

This may well be the best album of the year, but then, where Joni is concerned, comparisons have little point. She is in a class of her own. ***Nick Logan***



Joni works on her "superb, controlled" vocals with a good dose of the evil



Stephen Stills: falls just short of self-pity

STEPHEN STILLS
Stephen Stills 2
Atlantic De Luxe

NME 24 July 1971, page 6

In the end there's something just a little unsatisfying and frustrating about Steve Stills' second solo album. Anyone looking for the neat self-contained roundness and polished finish of the kind of songs Stills was singing at the inception of CS&N won't find them here; rather the songs of this album are incomplete, open ended, haphazard in construction, sometimes ill-conceived or ill-executed.

It's raw, if you like… like a nerve end is raw. Like the Lennon album was honest and raw.

In short, the songs, the frustrations, reflect the man, in whose apparent erosion of spirit and resolve we the listeners are voyeurishly invited to participate.

Threaded through the material on this album is a pained, despairing quality that I would like to think falls just short of self-pity. The heartfelt plea to know the reason for the pain in 'Open Secret', among the set's best tracks, saves itself from tumbling into a self-pitying abyss because the "*pain*" is not specified but is universal and identifiable with.

That might not go for 'Relaxing Town' and 'Bluebird Revisited' – in which Stills harks back to the old Springfield number – the former concerning itself with the currently popular subject of the rock star wanting escape from the pressures of his chosen career, the latter offering an intrusion on a painful love affair.

But it's in the main a musically strong, if somewhat distressing, album. Stills, as on his first solo set, has gathered round him accomplices of the highest calibre – Eric Clapton, Dave Crosby, Nils Lofgren and Billy Preston among them – as well as contrasts in the arrangements. These range from the courtly simplicity of the charming 'Change Partners' and the acoustic 'Word Game' to the brash Memphis Horns-featuring cuts 'Bluebird', 'Open Secret' and 'Ecology Song'.

A standout track is 'Fishes And Scorpions', which boasts some beautiful guitar playing (Clapton?) and a strong Stills vocal redolent of the phrasing and pitch of Neil Young.

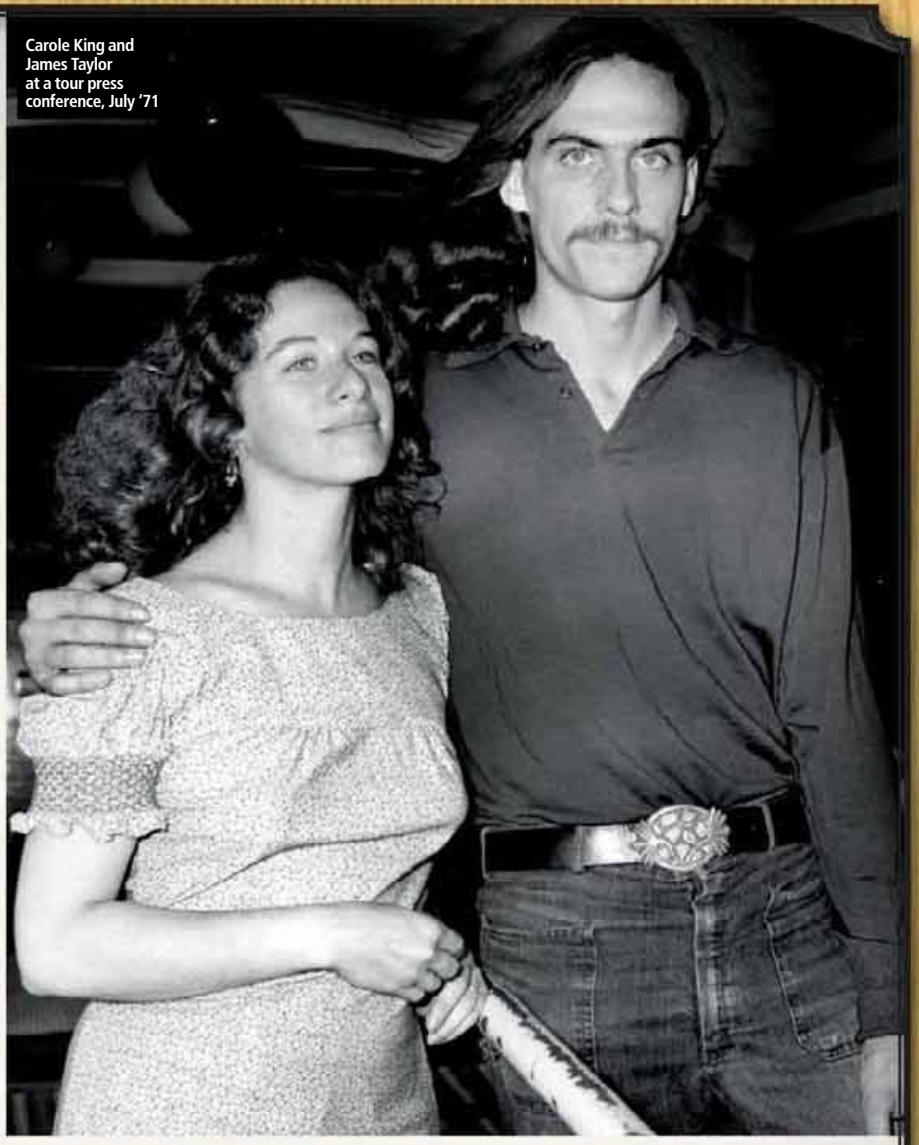
The lengthy 'Word Game' invites comparisons with the 'Masters Of War' Bob Dylan. Here Stills launches into a bitter polemic against oppressors of all shades that bristles with the kind of repressed emotion that made Neil Young's 'Southern Man' such a masterpiece.

That leaves just the lengthy and plaintive 'Sugar Babe', again a standout cut, to mention. For Stills, if it ever was, it isn't a game any longer. ***Nick Logan***

The listeners are voyeurishly invited to participate in the erosion of his spirit

REX FEATURES/MICHAEL PUTLAND–RETNA

MM, 17 July 1971, page 18



Carole King and James Taylor at a tour press conference, July '71

£15 TO SEE THE PIED PIPER

The Taylor gang hits Britain...

Outside London's Royal Festival Hall last Friday, ticket touts offered £15 for £1.50 seats for the James Taylor concert.

Inside, when he walked on stage, James received tumultuous applause simply for tuning up his guitar before starting. All his spoken words were received glowingly by a loving crowd.

"You're easy," he told the audience. He soon realised that he had only to be there to score maximum points.

That's the stage Taylor-worship has reached now: he commands a sheep-like following of devotees who believe that just to be seen in his company signifies good taste, and that James' disarming manner is part of his act. The Taylor audience seems to want to accept anything he does as beyond criticism.

It's a remarkable achievement for James, but also uncanny – because he doesn't appear to enjoy his status as Pied Piper of the acoustic movement. When he's on stage you get the strong feeling that he'd been far happier playing among a few friends in a local folk club, exchanging songs, helping fellow musicians with their songs. He comes over like a gigging musician who's suddenly been elevated to an uncomfortable perch.

He seems bemused and baffled by pop stardom and judging from his unsmiling postures on and off the stage since arriving in Britain, he doesn't outwardly appear very happy.

Perhaps that's part of the man's remote make-up, for his London concert was musically thoroughly enjoyable. James makes a mysterious rock idol but he's a fine musician and judged on purely musical terms he gave a majestic performance of fine songs gently and lovingly sung – one man and his guitar, with a load of dainty, quixotic narratives. His outlook may be doomy and introspective, but it's intensely personal and adds to the charisma of the man.

What we saw on Friday was the James Taylor Gang Show, Live From Los Angeles; much of the West Coast's most attractive sounds with James accompanied by such strong names from album credits as Russ Kunkel (drums), Lee Skiar (bass) and the amazing, swooping lead guitar of Danny Kootch joining Taylor on some songs.

And after ten years of waiting, we saw Carole King. With America's Number One-selling album and single she arrived here as a topical success but with a glorious past to recapture, too. So urgent and moving was her performance that it seemed a pity she had to share the stage with James, for either of them would have been a more than adequate solo attraction. As it was they combined to present together with the jamming musicians from Jo Mama, a marvellous programme.

James' songs were straight from his albums, with only one surprise, The Drifters' hit 'On Broadway'. Opening with 'Sweet Baby James', he sailed through 'Something In The Way She Moves', 'Soldiers', 'Carolina In My Mind', and many others, followed by an all-in finale.

This featured Carole King and Gail Haness (Jo Mama's singer) as backing vocals while all the musicians went on stage for a grand jam with James on 'Come On Brother, Get On Up And Help Me Find This Group'.

Taylor is at least as powerful in person as on record. Too little is said of his instrumental work; his empathy with his own vocal work is outstanding and he has a beautifully delicate touch with the guitar.

His personal magnetism is beyond dispute. Sitting on stage with piercing, menacing eyes, blazing like beacons, he speaks just like he sings. Announcing a song about a hot dog, he said: "You can get a good chilli dog at Pinks at the corner of Melrose and Fairfax in Los Angeles" – at which the audience broke into applause.

Information disseminated by James Taylor is obviously like word from an apostle. James reaches out and touches thousands of people with this rural homespun patter, but he is mystified by such willing ovations.

Information disseminated by James Taylor is obviously like word from an apostle. He reaches out and touches thousands

Carole King sitting at the piano with her unique repertoire, was a new experience for us all, and quite simply, electric. Somehow, the popular music of ten years was embodied in Carole's all-too-short time on stage. Her songs, beautifully suicidal, mirror the vulnerability and painful despair of the human condition, and at the Festival Hall she established herself as the First Lady of popular song. To have written things like 'I Feel The Earth Move,' 'Will You Love Me Tomorrow', and 'No Easy Way Down' – that would have been enough of a contribution.

To perform them with such meaning, playing piano so discreetly is the clincher. And when Carole sings lines like "*Something inside has died and I can't hide/And I just can't fake it*" it sounds so REAL. She is sentimental without being maudlin.

'Up On The Roof' was performed with a knowing style, but her encore 'Natural Woman' was breathtaking. Her work sounds much better in person than on the 'Tapestry' album – she seemed to come alive at that piano.

Throughout this three-and-a-half hour show, there was an ultra-cool atmosphere among a group of musicians with plenty to say to each other and to the audience.

There wasn't one weak link in the people on that stage; everyone communicated a love for music and an ability to project that feeling to each other and to the audience. A really great Gang Show.

Ray Coleman

16 NEW MUSICAL EXPRESS On sale Friday, week ending July 31, 1971

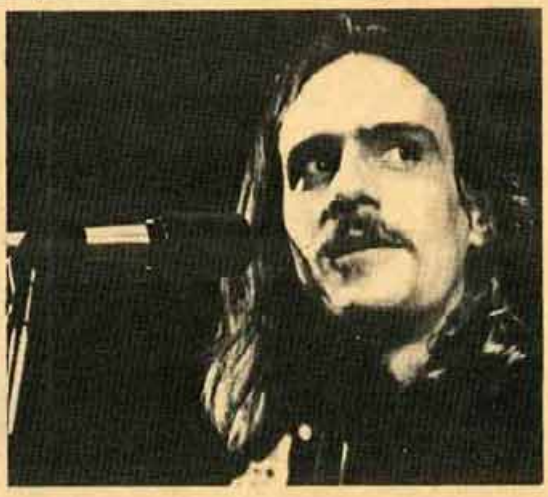
HARDIN: Private anguish

BYRDS: 16 furious fingers

SONNY/BROWNIE: Laid on a rare musical delicacy

INCREDIBLES: Incited first standing ovation

PAXTON: Carries his own warmth



LINCOLN FOLK FESTIVAL

REPORT: Nick Logan

PICTURES: Chris Walter

NICE TO SEE NO REPEAT OF LONDON DROOLING FOR JAMES

INCARCERATED and suffocating in the traffic jams twisting like knotty veins along the narrow Lincolnshire fen roads. They'd opened up the fields, put up a parking lot.

"By the time we got to Woodstock . . ." it was almost over.

Not quite, but Ralph McTell and Tim Hart and Maddy Prior had to be sacrified to the traffic flow, or lack of it, and Dion was up on his chair in the sunshine, smiling often and gamely behind yellow shades, asides in the old Di Marci Bronx accent winning new friends.

The Lincoln Folk Festival, 30,000 people in a field near the village of Bardney (Pop: 1550) on Saturday, promised to be one of the more enjoyable, least uptight of recent gatherings; billed as a "festival of contemporary and traditional folk music" and headlined by James Taylor, the "acoustic" though more as it transpired electric Byrds and good old uncle Tom Paxton. "Sunny Skies," "Jesus Is Alright" and "Talking Pot Luck Vietnam Blues" . . . not much incitement to unruliness there.

Bringing together a sumptous feast of the cream of British and American folk artists, Lincoln was indeed a rarity not only for its peacefulness. Even if a great many had been lured by Taylor the '71 superstar and/or the Byrds, the dedicated folk aficianado had every contrast he could wish for with every change of equipment: the private agonies of Tim Hardin, the compassionate communication of Tom Paxton; the engaging eccentricities of the Incredible String Band, the awesome thrust and musicianship of the electric Byrds; the "Universal Soldier" of Buffy St Marie, the dying diseased soldier of Steeleye Span. All topped off by the simple mastery of hill-topping James.

Indeed it was pleasing to see James Taylor received for just that simple mastery, with no repeat of the slobbering sycophancy that marred his London Festival Hall concert of a fortnight earlier.

James is a most talented performer and writer of a whole host of mighty pur-ty toons — maybe the pur-tiest around — but he sure ain't the messiah-like deity the drooling London audience, with its embarrassing bursts of applause for tuning up, would have us believe.

Coming on under a clear and starry night sky, after the foot-of-stage area had been jam packed and warmed by the Byrds, Taylor worked easy through a 15-song set that enhanced the more earth-bound side of his reputation as a skilled and surefooted entertainer and performer.

With just his own acoustic guitar as accompaniment, his gangling frame perched on a chair, he opened as at the Festival Hall with "Sweet baby James" and was soon again displaying the communication and empathy that seem effortlessly his. Ee's a fervently way with 'im, as our James.

"Riding On A Railroad," "Country Road" and "You Can Close Your Eyes," all performed against a completely sympathetic picking guitar, honoured a familiar pattern, although without the services of Danny Kootch, Taylor returned to a solo version of "Steamroller."

"Hey Mister That's Me Up On The Jukebox" brought bassist Lee Sklaar and Russ Kunkel in on tongos to join him as the bonfires flared up around the site to augment the green and red lighting on stage.

Carole King's "You've Got A Friend," Taylor's single from "Mud Slide Slim," was a new inclusion in the stage set before Kunkel — as superb and tasteful as in London — switched to full drum kit for "Soldiers." James took up electric guitar for "Knocking Round The Zoo," returned to acoustic to close with "Fire And Rain" and chose "Carolina In My Mind" as a popular encore.

Back at the start of the day, Dion scored a pleasing if not resounding success — it was a little too early for that — with his acoustic-accompanied material, originals mixed with a blues and a couple of folk-slanted rock numbers, one being "Too Much Monkey Business." Introducing his "Sunshine Lady," he brought back nostalgia to those old enough to remember with the explanation that it had been written at Lauderdale by the sea. "That's in Runaround Sue," he prompted, adding to the burst of recognition: "You old man you." Despite the Feliciano/Van Morrison vocal inflection that he unfortunately shares with every other alternate folk soloist, the new Dion is capable of an enjoyable set.

British audiences have always had a tender spot for American . . . women, and why so many of them enjoy paying here was obvious from the response that greeted Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee. Bespectacled Sonny, silver cane at his side, sat himself down and raised his harmonica, Brownie perched above him on a stool, the pair of them in matching shirts, and preceded to lay on a rare musical delicacy in an act that took in "Worried Man," "Roll Me Baby," "See See Rider" and "Key To The Highway" . . . all the time Brownie's silver finger-picks glistening in the sun. Warm brown smiles — a real joy, for them as well as us. They finished with "Walk On," trooped off, and trooped back a second later to encore with "Rock Island Line."

The first mixture of contemporary and traditional came with Steeleye Span, bringing back Tim Hart and Maddy Prior along with guitarist Martin Carthy, violinist Peter Knight and bassist Tyger Hutchings.

The Yorkshire traditional "The Female Drummer," sung by Maddy, and the Scottish song "False Knight Of The Road," sung by Carthy—both from their "Please To See The King" album — got them over balancing problems and into a frantic medley of reels featuring Knight's fiddle and Maddy on spoons.

Steeleye's prominent and influential role in the merging of acoustic and electric idioms was perhaps best evidenced in the softly undulating backing laid down behind Maddy Prior's plaintive rendition of "The Dying Soldier" Pity, though, that there was no a capella "Rave On" or "Let's Dance" showstoppers each on other occasions.

Spectrum

If Steeleye occupy one extreme of the folk spectrum with their songs of wren-hunting and weasel, Tim Hardin is at the other. He came on against a backdrop of two grand pianos, one manned by a pianist the other for him later in the set, and followed a brief "Reason To Believe" with a succession of newer and less melodic compositions that, apart from "If I Had A Hammer" and "Black Sheep Boy" at the end, he might as well have been singing in his own front room.

It was sad to watch. Hardin has much to offer, but as he and his pianist occupied their private stags, the singer white-faced rocking back and forward in anguished swaying, his pianist behind him even further out, rolling his head in apparent stupor, their act became more like a bizzarre tableau than a musical performance. Most of all it was a private and incommunicable agony.

As one of the bill's best examples of the perfect style marriage, Fentanga ought to have come out as one of its successes. Yet the opening "Reflections" went on beyond its limits, the Terry Coxpenned second number took a similar path and the fact that the day's sole burst of mic fell in the middle of their set couldn't alone account for their low key performances.

When the rains dried up, it was left to Danny Thompson's always-brilliant bass work to raise the set, and although "Night Flight" saw them off to a warm reception it was a pretty safe bet that it would.

It fell to a sparkling-form Incredible String Band to incite the first standing ovation of the day. I haven't seen them for a long time, certainly not since Kinq was replaced by Malcolm. Now there's a strange lad for you, all mantaral eyes and rocking just a wee bit embarrassed as Robin Williamson jigged about feyly at front of stage and Licorice, done up like some animated Victorian doll, alternatively clonked her drum and picked her guitar.

In sequence, it was the medley of Irish jigs performed by Williamson on fiddle — the stage fair bouncing up and down under the exuberance — that stirred the blood, the tale of the reincarnation of bailey "Big Ted" the Welsh pig that got them smiling and the calypso-style closer "Adam and Eve." Malcom and Licorice with prop (a green apple) acting out the parts that sent them off to prolonged cheers and cries for more.

Obviously, as Dave Pegg was glimpsed with his hair, Richard Thompson strolled out with lead guitar and Gerry Conway sat himself down in the drum seat, Sandy Denny on her first appearance since the demise of Fotheringay wasn't going to lack for skilled and sympathetic accompaniment. The girl herself chose first to bat at grand piano and launched strong voiced into a couple of new songs which will doubtless figure on her soon to be released solo album.

With her switch from piano to acoustic guitar, Dylan's "Down In The Flood" raised the adrenalin to the afternoon's electric high water mark so far, as well as ghosts of past Fairport line ups, with Richard Thompson's splendidly tasteful guitar keeping edge and bite in a really hard rock workout.

Back on the piano, and still on new material, Sandy proceeded to reveal a new facet to the Denny voice, a new strength and maturity possibly repressed by the demands of previous formations. Now her own master, or mistress, it will be interesting to see where vocally as well as lyrically she takes her new freedom of expression.

And as to Paxton, the master of communication . . . an art his arrival made appear so obviously lacking in most who had preceded him. Not for the fact that he's 33 or whatever, or because he's balding — any all those other snippets of information journalists are fond of dusting off whenever Paxton is the subject — he is a remarkably skilled entertainer.

He's a bit like Country Joe in a way, in that he seems to carry his own warmth with him. A crowd will respond to what he stands for and what he's done before — a good many at Lincoln will have remembered the Isle of Wight — but also for what they sense or know he will do.

Accompanied by a bassist and pianist, the latter his sometimes co-writer David Horowitz, Paxton gave an object lesson in participation. His songs are open and all embracing, optimistic but bitingly true, a hilarious account of scrildiness in a low dive at Saturday's festival preceding as . . . capella children's fantasy written for his daughter Jennifer and his song about the American way of death "Forest Lawn."

The stage lights were going on as Paxton hit a sweet reflective key with "The Last Thing On My Mind" and "Rambling Boy" and then returned to the irony of "Vietnam Blues" to take off with him a standing ovation.

The Byrds were simply tremendous. Though billed as the "acoustic" Byrds there was a case for the Trade Descriptions Act to be against the most beautiful ocean blue sky, the sun setting in the opposite line of sight, they rampaged breathtakingly fast into "So You Wanna Be A Rock And Roll Star" and with scarcely a pause into "Hey Mr Spaceman."

Such was their driving force, even with the switch to acoustic on "Bugler" — vocals by Clarence White, that the time taken between numbers to set up seemed non existent.

Much of the time there were the four of them shoulder to shoulder in a line, three guitars and Gene Parsons' banjo . . . four immovable bodies against the sky, four guitar necks aimed skywards at almost identical angles, four right hands skilfully at work, 16 fingers picking and flicking in furious formation.

"Mr Tambourine Man," Woody Guthrie's "Pretty Boy Floyd," then back to the electric line up for "You Ain't Going Nowhere," "My Back Pages," "Jesus Is Alright," an encore of "Chestnut Mare," and a bonus in the gospel "Glory Glory." It was sheer joy to just rock back on your heels and let it all swamp over.

Melody Maker

August 7, 1971 6p weekly USA 30 cents

Now . . . McCartney forms his own band

PAUL McCARTNEY has formed a group to record and play live gigs — with wife Linda on piano and vocals.

The rest of the line-up is Denny Laine, formerly with Moodies and Airforce, on guitar, and American sessionman Denny Siewell on drums. Siewell played on McCartney's last album, "Ram."

The band, which doesn't have a name yet, recorded last week at EMI's Abbey Road studios, and Shelly Turner of McCartney Productions Ltd. told the MM that Paul is "very happy with the band and with the tapes they made."

Live appearances will be delayed several months because "Linda is expecting a child in the Autumn, and Paul doesn't want a pregnant pianist on stage. The band has been working very hard lately, and they'll all be taking a holiday. Paul and Linda are going to the Mediterranean."

Shelley added: "Paul is also doing his utmost to finalise a contract on paper as to what he is now. He has high hopes of resolving the present problems with the rest of the Beatles in the very near future."

Apple release a single from "Ram" next week. The titles are "Back Seat Of My Car" and "Heart Of The Country."

BOB BRINGS IT ALL HOME

from RAY COLEMAN in New York

IN ONE of rock's most frenzied weekends, Bob Dylan joined George Harrison, Ringo Starr, Eric Clapton and Leon Russell for a charity show here — while The Who suffered a "miniature Altamont" in which a youth was stabbed to death outside their concert stadium.

Priceless

Before two sell-out audiences totalling 38,000 at Madison Square Garden, the two ex-Beatles appeared with a priceless line-up of superstardom, topped at the last minute by Dylan's surprise appearance. He played mostly his old material, sounding and looking as he did in 1965, and was accompanied on acoustic guitars by George Harrison and Leon Russell.

The atmosphere was electric and Dylan, though visibly and vocally nervous in the first show, warmed up enough to put on a second performance of unprecedented style.

Denim

Dressed in blue denim jacket and fawn trousers, he looked fitter and fresher than for a long time — and his emphasis on early material seemed, especially in this acoustic setting, to suggest he had turned full circle in his tastes.

The show raised about half a million dollars for the Pakistani refugee children of Bangla Desh. Both concerts were filmed and recorded. Black marketeers asked at least £20 for seats which were priced between £2.50 and £5. There were cassette recordings being made in many parts of the hall and bootleg records are inevitable.

RINGO, GEORGE AND DYLAN: raised 500,000 dollars for Bangla Desh

But for The Who . . . a 'miniature Altamont'

THE WHO began a sell-out American tour faced with a sordid story of a man being stabbed to death outside their first New York concert. The killing was un-connected with The Who's music, or their show — but the group were unwittingly the victims of some ugly publicity.

It happened at The Who's open air concert in torrential rain before 15,000 at Forest Hills in the New York suburb of Queens. Outside the stadium, a fight between a youth of 21 and two ex-Fillmore East ushers resulted in one of the 21-year-old ushers being stabbed to death. Police charged the youth with homicide and felonious assault. The youth, who denied the charge was himself stabbed in the head in another melee.

Police alleged that the youth tried to slip past guards after finding all tickets had been sold. Fights followed.

The Who and the rest of the crowd knew nothing of the incident until after. Not until next day did The Who realise that the brawl had led to a death.

Pete Townshend commented: "It's so hard to know, after the event, how much that killing fitted into the context of a show. I personally don't think the two things were related — it could have happened at any sort of event really. But rock is in such a bad way at the moment with such things attached to it in a political and social sense. "It has become a focal point for society's ills."

The New York newspaper headline read: "Youth Slain at Rock Concert." Keith Moon remarked: "Change that to 'Rock Slain At Youth Concert!'"

■ Dylan / Harrison show report and review of The Who's new stage show — see page 22.

BUFFY

The freak who lost her feathers...

Cher alike: Synth pioneer Buffy plans her 2015 comeback

MM, 7 August 1971, page 11

Buffy Saint-Marie is sceptical of Britain and it's not surprising. When Miss Marie last arrived on these shores it was as though the days of the old Wild West were still very much alive. People peered at her, scratched their heads, and decided that she must be a freak. After all, what kind of Red Indian was it that didn't wear feathers? And where was the warpaint that we had expected?

"Songs just happen, like sneezing, and there's not much point in faking it" Buffy Saint-Marie

So since that experience Buffy has steered clear of the old country, except for the odd visit to friends. "It was terrible," she recalls, "They'd been pushing Red Indian this and Red Indian that. People were asking me where my feathers and beads were, which didn't offend me but was an awful waste of time."

It is also a drag, because it's meant that after her first three or four albums – none of the others were put out here – she was generally neglected, which considering her brilliance and her contribution to music is a bit like totally ignoring Schubert.

A Cree Indian, Buffy grew up in New England and graduated from the University Of Massachusetts, reading philosophy. After graduating she was considering going to India to study some more, but went to New York for a weekend, sang in Greenwich Village and was spotted. The following autumn she turned professional.

"I played piano before I learned guitar," she says. "There was a piano in the house from the time I was four, and playing it came so easy I thought playing it on stage would be cheating so I never have!" It's said that when she was 17 she could tune a guitar 32 different ways.

Her songs are about love, sadness, death, wickedness and her voice is a rich vibrato that can cajole or whiplash. She could make 'Ba Ba Black Sheep' sound like a ghoulish lament if she was so inclined.

Nowadays when she's not working, Buffy lives with her husband on one of the outer Hawaiian islands, 100 miles from Honolulu.

"We have a farm and it's really not inhabited and far enough away so I rest more than I would if I lived in town somewhere. I almost moved to England once to live, but then I met my husband who's Hawaiian."

Her latest album to be released here is, 'She Used To Wanna Be A Ballerina', a magnificently powerful work. Buffy recorded the album about 18 months ago, and she's done a further two since then, as yet unreleased. On 'Ballerina' she's used Ry Cooder, Neil Young & Crazy Horse (she has included his song 'Helpless') and Merry Clayton on back-up vocals.

"I like each album to be different, and if I meet different people having a different kind of life, then the album will reflect that. With 'Ballerina' I'd just met Neil and that lot. I did a country and western album in Nashville, and on one LP, 'Illuminations', which is probably my favourite, I used a synthesizer."

'Soldier Blue' is her first chart entry in Britain

There's no set formula for her song writing, her songs just come to her. When she was doing a photo session in Hampstead recently she started scribbling down lyrics on the back of a bill.

"It just comes to me wherever I am, sometimes when I'm sleeping, which can be a drag. I never decide 'I will write some songs because I've got a record due next week,' it just happens, kind of like sneezing, and there's not much sense faking it.

"And I'm not critical of myself, because for me they're free gifts, they're not something I sit down and compose like a high school thesis, so I always like my songs... the ones I remember anyway."

Buffy spends a lot of time round Indian reservations and does a lot of benefit concerts, but tends to steer clear of getting involved in demonstrations.

"I think marches and things are best left to those experienced in them, and I'm not. I figure it's best to do what you're good at, so I sing songs about it. What frustrates me is that people won't pick up the ball. I try to give people something they didn't have when they came in, poetically, musically and philosophically."

Caroline Boucher

SINGLE

BUFFY SAINT-MARIE

Soldier Blue

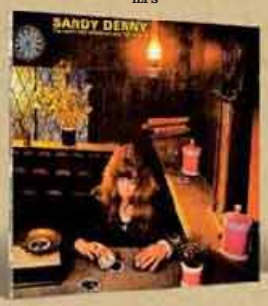
Vanguard

NME, 7 August 1971, page 9

It's taken five months for the new Buffy Saint-Marie single to enter the charts, which is a long time to wait for anybody! The song is the title music to the film *Soldier Blue*, a movie about the brutal and often unfair treatment of American Red Indians a century ago. Who better to write the music or sing the song than Buffy, whose big campaign in life is to fight for the rights of the American Indians? Half Red Indian herself, Buffy, who is 29, lives in a mountain house on Garden Island in Hawaii. 'Soldier Blue' is her first release for a few years in Britain, and her first chart entry here, too. Currently she is working in Japan, but a tour is being lined up for her here in October. While Buffy may live in comparative comfort at her house in Hawaii, many of her relations still live on reservations in America. And she makes it her business to devote some of her money to help the American Indians fight for their rights. Although she's been writing songs since she was a child, it was only in her last year at college that she made her first public appearance. The response she received encouraged her to make singing and writing her career! ***Julie Webb***

Buffy Saint-Marie in the limelight at BBC TV Centre

SANDY DENNY
The North Star Grassmen And The Ravens
ILPS



NME, 9 October 1971, page 13

What makes this album for me is Sandy Denny's voice. It is so different, with a full bodied range, full of emotion and feeling. Many will say it is just fashionable to dig Denny. Maybe, but there is no getting away from the fact that she's a good singer, on the traditional pieces, the more emotive ones, or the good old rockers.

Her career with the Fairports and then Fotheringay has obviously helped her to develop her singing and writing techniques, but I don't think this record is the best she can do. And frankly in places I was disappointed with what had gone down.

'The Optimist''s arrangement doesn't flow, and 'Wretched Wilbur' is downright scrappy. 'John The Gun', a good song in its own right, has many similarities to 'Late November' and is only saved by the chorus.

These are only incidental criticisms, and it is a successful record in the main.

Sandy has also continued her association with past colleagues by using Richard Thompson, Jerry Donahue. Pat Donaldson and Gerry Conway. With Jerry and Richard often playing together it gives the tunes a lot of bite, with their lead patterns snapping at each other. ***Tony Stewart***

Sandy's voice is so different, with a full-bodied range full of emotion and feeling

JOHN MARTYN
Bless The Weather
Island

MM, 4 December 1971, page 52

Both as a songwriter and performer John Martyn concentrates on exploring well-defined areas of mood and tone. His songs, lyrically and melodically, are introspective and he is a fine enough musician to translate this into subtle arrangement or perhaps it would be a closer estimate of Martyn's working methods to say improvisation. Even the rock formula of 'Sugar Lump' contributes to intensity without damaging the sensitive musical balance. Very similar tonal shades complement one another purely because Martyn and co-producer John Wood recognise their potential and don't blot them out with some contrasting sound.

There are even times when these songs come within range of comparison with other singer/songwriters with their guitars and pianos lurking in the background. The difference is that Martyn never has to grope for a mood. There are no awkward spaces while piano augmentation is allowed to trample blindly over the continuity and effect of a song. Simply, it sounds as though he knows what he is doing and the result is accordingly precise. The instrumental aspect benefits from Martyn's choice of musicians – Danny Thompson (string bass), Tony Reeves (electric bass), Roger Powell (drums), Ian Whiteman (keyboards), Richard Thompson (electric guitar), Smiley De Jonnes and Beverley Martyn – although they are all strictly harnessed.

The songs, all John's apart from 'Singin' In The Rain', are absorbingly attractive, their impact increased by the clarity of the recording and intricate backing. In the past his lyrics have sometimes been monotonous, but on this album he has countered that without splitting from complete simplicity (or simple completeness). His 'Walk To The Water' communicates so much with simple words. My one disappointment is that John hasn't recorded more of the reverb guitar instrumentalism, as it offers a potential way outside common reference points. ***Andrew Meanes***

John Martyn: complete simplicity or simple completeness

Melody Maker

LENNON
•It's terrible how they treat me•–see page 24

MM ON STAGE!
Blues giant here

Bad Taste?

CAT PURRS UP TWO CHARTS

CAT STEVENS
Teaser And The Firecat
Island

Disc and Music Echo, 18 September 1971, page 16

It's irrelevant to decide which of the three Stevens albums is the best, but this one is probably superior because the tracks are all so good that no single one stands out immediately as a single. So Island chose 'Moon Shadow'. As before, he continues with minimum instrumentation, leaning on acoustic guitars, drums and bass as the basic unit. There is a subtle Greek influence about the music (with the exception of 'Rubylove', where it is the basis of the tune); a bell here, a tempo there, which brings it out. It is nice to get a whiff of Greek'n'garlic as opposed to the country and western style that besots the heads and music of just about everybody who isn't playing hard rock.

THE BAND
Cahoots
Capitol

Disc and Music Echo, 13 November, 1971, page 45

Like 'Stage Fright', this falls just short of their sublime second album, but it's still better in every way than most bands will manage in a lifetime. They remain one of the two or three bands of our time who have been, and are, true originals. Standout track is '4 Per Cent Pantomime', featuring a sensational duet between Robbie Robertson and Van Morrison. Another guest is New Orleans pianist/composer Allen Toussaint, who arranged the Lee Dorsey-ish horns on 'Carnival'. Most of the tracks continue to reflect Robbie's love affair with American history, although 'Where Do We Go From Here' has a more topical theme.

KRISTOFFERSON

The ex-teacher, soldier, janitor, boozer, boxer and general hobo who has joined the top rank of American singer-writers

NME, 6 January 1971, page 10

Nashville. Green, green grass. The airport building, like most of the places in town six miles away, is one-storied, including the studios around 16th Street.

Olive-coloured, with just the wording "Home Of Monument" painted on the front wall, Fred Foster's famous studio is old. It could have been a church hall or a warehouse first.

The pretty lady sitting on the concrete step outside sunning herself, said Kris Kristofferson was recording his third LP with Fred Foster, head of Monument, and it was more than her life was worth to let me in.

Kris is America's latest hot product and the album is eagerly awaited to follow 'The Silver Tongued Devil And I' (released in Britain this week) into the US album Top Ten. His new single, 'Loving Her Was Easier' was tipped for possible British success by *NME*'s Derek Johnson last week. And his 'Me And Bobby McGee' album is released here next month.

Last year, too, his 'Sunday Morning Coming Down' was chosen as Nashville's CMA song of the year. He is big stuff.

The young lady took a card inside and came back to say: "Come back at 6.15 and visit awhile then." I did and was ushered into the darkened studio with its coloured spotlights, coked up (cola, of course) and given the big hellos from Fred Foster (an old friend) and Kris, who was most friendly.

He has a slighter frame than I expected (he was a Golden Gloves boxer and an Oxford University Blue for fisticuffs), smiling but obviously tired and rocking a bit on his heels after several hours in the studio.

Informally dressed in sweatshirt, heavier waistcoat, jeans and terrible old boots, he gets on with the job, gently bossing the six musicians with him and sometimes countering Fred Foster's ideas for speeding up numbers.

Kris apologised for keeping me out at first. Then he told me he hopes his next trip to England will be better organised. The Isle Of Wight isn't a happy memory after a long wait on the stage, and *Top Of The Pops* even more unhappy, when he made an unaided journey from Earls Court to the TV centre and found the producer didn't like his music. Eventually he got a second or two with Tony Blackburn, who started with, "What are you doing here?"

"By that time I wondered that, too," Kris said with a grin. He has a quiet, almost whispering speaking voice, keeping his vocal power for his singing.

In America he is hailed as another Bob Dylan. His recent songs have clever turns of phrase and read like poetry, though he says: "Me, poet? That sounds pretentious."

He's not pretentious at all. He gave up a secure future as a teacher to go to Nashville three years ago to create and communicate. He stuck out a job as a janitor at CBS studios for 58 dollars a week for about a year and then got the sack from it.

He lived in a 25 dollars-a-month rooming house near the studios. He kept writing to counteract loneliness and his craving for the bottle and other stimulants. It was very different from the first 30 years of his life.

He was a brilliant literary student at a Texas university, won a Rhodes scholarship to England's Oxford University, spent two happy years there, reading Shakespeare and Blake and Hemingway, boxing and singing a bit as Kris Carson, doing six sides with Tony Hatch (his first session) for the defunct Top Rank label in 1959, managed by Paul Lincoln, who had Tommy Steele connections. He wrote two novels, both rejected.

After college he went into the Army and became a helicopter pilot in Germany, got married and had two children. But the Army made him feel stagnant creatively, so he left after several years.

A post teaching English at an American military college awaited him. But he had some songs and wanted to go to Nashville to see if they could be published. He got to like Nashville and decided that was his future. His decision sent his wife and two children home "to mother" and led to a break up.

He also "lost" his parents, who felt he was giving up a career to be a bum ("I was, too," says Kris). But before he died early this year, Kris' father made it all up with Kris. "He was a general in the air force and just couldn't understand why I became a hippy." says Kris.

"My father was a general in the air force, and just couldn't understand why I became a hippy" Kris Kristofferson

Kris was no overnight success. "I would have given it all up but for Johnny Cash and Fred Foster and Roger Miller and others saying my songs were good. I kept plugging on, sometimes not believing it was still me, the ex-Army man. But I was creating and happy."

Now he's got it all going for him, ever since Roger Miller did his hitch-hiking song, 'Me And Bobby McGee' in mid-1969. He's going to make a film of this, starring in it, with Dennis Hopper, of *Easy Rider* fame, and for whom he acted in the forthcoming great film, *The Last Movie*.

His third album is awaited in America with great impatience. I heard some of this, now in its finishing stages, in the Monument studios, which is just one well-equipped recording room and one studio room which could hold at a pinch 20 musicians and no more. Here many stars have made hits, including Roy Orbison.

Kris had seven with him, four session men and three who tour with him. The latter are bassist Terry Paul, keyboard man Donny Fritts and lead guitarist Stephen Bruton (with Kris on guitar, though not in the studio). Among the session men were guitarist Bucky Wilkins, son of Mrs Marijohn Wilkins, owner of Buckhorn Music publishers who have some of Kris' copyrights, and drummer Gerry Kerrigan.

Songs to follow his successes like 'Sunday Morning Coming Down', 'To Beat The Devil' (about hopes of being successful, dedicated to Cash), 'For The Good Times' (written after his marriage broke up, thinking of when it was a happy union) and his bluesy 'Me And Bobby McGee' are on the new LP.

I had pre-hears of 'Devil's Got Her Soul', about a girl and the wages of sin, sung in a dark, husky voice to a 'Frankie And Johnny' type of rhythm; a soft, easy song called 'Sugar Man', with a jog-trot, danceable sound; 'Josie', a lively song about an interesting girl: and the Hank Williams-influenced 'Somebody Nobody Knows' about a man dying in a city gutter, a real tear-jerker.

On one playback, Kris' ear observed that one track, a guitar one, was playing backwards. Fred had this rectified. Meanwhile a good-looking *bon viveur* called Bob Beckham, publisher of Combine Music, which now brings out Kris' songs, arrived with a bottle of Scotch, which he passed round, everyone swigging from the bottle. He looks after Kris and Tony Joe White among others.

Sitting beside Fred Foster was Mort Thomas, bespectacled, calm, business-like engineer, who recalled to me: "I did three million-sellers in one day once – 'Walk Right Back' (*Everlys*), 'Ahab The Arab' (*Ray Stevens*) and 'Wooden Heart' (*Elvis*)," Mort has been engineering for some 30 years.

A visitor to the studio was Wayne Carson, who wrote 'The Letter' and other hits, and who is now singing under Fred Foster's banner.

We listened to Kris working on a song about going to New York because LA was getting him down and how he's going to keep going, *"until I die, as long as I can get up again"*. One or two takes went wrong for various reasons and then Fred suggested Kris sing it a little faster. "Oh Fred," he moaned, tired.

So next take the drummer, session man Gerry Kerrigan, stepped up the pace without being told and it really helped. Perhaps that is the secret of Nashville – the session men know just what to do to help things!

Andy Gray

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVE–REDFERNS

Kris Kristofferson, fresh-faced, beard-free and ready for the big time

NEW MUSICAL EXPRESS

June 23, 1973 U/S., Canada 30c 7p

CRYSTAL PALACE:
It's looking good

VAN MORRISON FOR RAINBOW

NME TICKETS PRIORITY

VAN MORRISON — former Them leader and now a superstar in his own right — appears in Britain next month.

He will play six major concert dates in this country, including two at London's Rainbow Theatre. And NME readers are today given an exclusive opportunity to book seats for the two London shows ONE WEEK before the box office opens to the public.

Details page 3

STEELEYE DRUMMER

Melody Maker

DYLAN BACK IN TRIUMPH!

Allmans cancel tour

Beatles to get back?

He plans British trip with The Band

JETHRO TULL INTERVIEW

NEW MUSICAL EXPRESS

March 24 1973

BOWIE FOR EARLS COURT

NEIL YOUNG SHOCK

And Diana Ross tour falls through

BEATLES DENIAL

DISC AND MUSIC ECHO

MARCH 18, 1972 6p USA 30c

Ringo and Frampton gig?

Fillmore to re-open

SEE PAGE 4

...en Stills – 'my best ever album'

SEE PAGE 3

JONI FOR LONDON AND MANCHESTER

Michael Jackson

Solo star or "family" man?

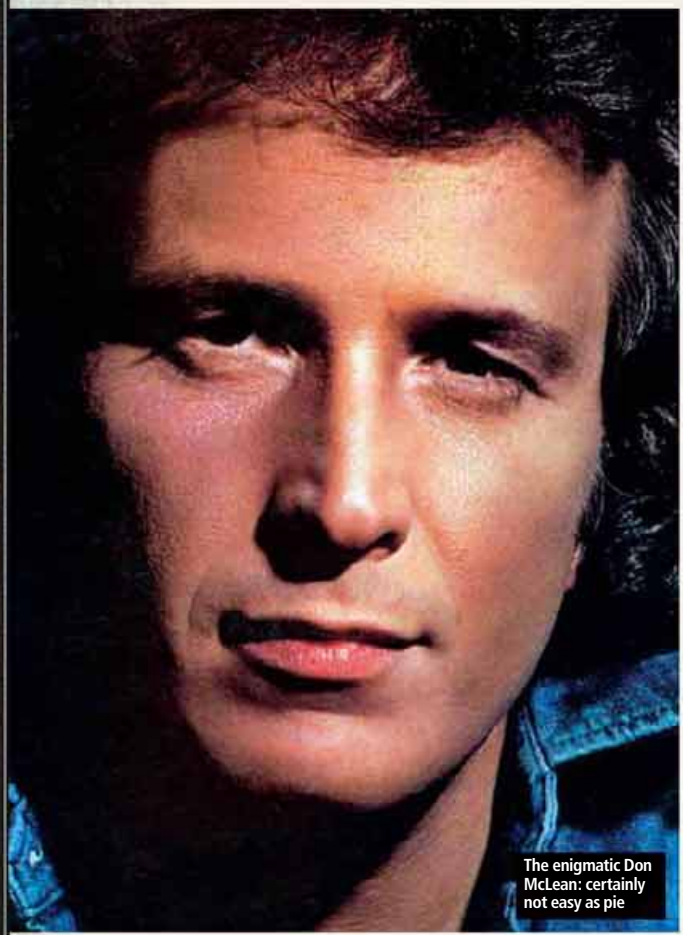
SEE PAGE 5

CHAPTER 5

1972-1974

NEW DYLANS QUEUE UP FOR SUPERSTARDOM, VAN BECOMES THE MAN AND CSN&Y TAKE FOLK ROCK INTO THE STADIUMS

THE MYSTERIOUS MIND OF DON MCLEAN



The enigmatic Don McLean: certainly not easy as pie

NME, 18 March 1972, page 10

"I'm not going to discuss the lyrics of 'American Pie', so you can forget those questions right now," Don McLean proclaimed. A wave of sighs swept the room, but amazingly nobody walked out.

Don McLean was giving a Toronto press conference; he's in the middle of a month-long 20-city tour of one-nighters and there's a press conference at every stop.

'American Pie' is being touted, by people who should know better, as a monumental record of the '70s and, although nobody is really sure just what the song means, as a major commentary on rock'n'roll music.

McLean's 'American Pie' album, his second, has become the 'Highway 61 Revisited' of this decade.

And that is why Don McLean no longer gives interviews. After this tour there will probably be no press conferences either.

"You can only answer the same question so many times," he offers in explaining his planned withdrawal.

McLean and his agents are not the only people turning a good buck from 'American Pie'. To his expressed disgust, several Americans are marketing their interpretations of his murky lyrics.

"I have never given my blessing to any interpretation of anything," he charges. "I want to make that absolutely clear. People go off on wrong tangents and start doing their own number.

"I haven't tried to hide anything," he pleads. "'American Pie' was just an attempt to use metaphors, the best I could to describe a certain loss that I felt in American music.

"Buddy Holly's death, for me, was a symbolic death that virtually all the characters in the song suffered. The music never dies, though, and all I was saying in the song was that people lack the basic trust to believe that the music will happen again."

When McLean dropped out of high school in 1964, he naturally drifted into the coffeehouse circuit.

"I remember that I was at the Bitter End when I was just 17. I'd never played a pub before in my life; I don't think I'd been out of the house. And one of the waitresses asked me: 'How old are you?' And I said 17. And she turned to the other waitress and said: 'What could anyone 17 years old have to say?' And I thought about it and agreed with her."

Four years later, a little older but no wealthier, McLean signed on with the New York State Government to tour the communities on the Hudson River valley.

"I had to play 50 river communities, three a day for a month or more while the state paid me 200 dollars a week," he recalls in his biography.

Meanwhile Pete Seeger was planning a project of his own to save the Hudson River. Seeger planned to sail a boat down the river, carrying ecological messages to the towns McLean had been visiting. McLean joined the crew, along with people like Ramblin' Jack Elliott and Lou Killen. Now he was running in fast company, musically speaking.

"I had a good reputation in the States. did not know what would happen. I didn't care, in fact. I just wanted to make records that meant something to me. It feels different but it's been a long time coming and I've been adjusting to it."

McLean's image of himself is that of a melancholy loner. "I can't travel on the road with other musicians. I like travelling alone and I like being alone most of the time.

"I don't give a damn whether anybody else likes my music as long as I'm happy with it. I feel that I have certain elements of myself that are universal to you and everybody else. So if I like something I feel that there's a good chance that you'll like it too.

"My first record was incredibly pessimistic, I think. I can't listen to it – it depresses me. I didn't set out to depress anybody, it's just that the record reflects a depressing period of my life.

"On the whole, I think my music is very positive. I'd say that 'American Pie' is a sad song.

"There are happy moments, just as there are happy moments in life. But life is generally sad. I'm not always melancholy. Sometimes I'm happy – happy as hell." And he grins at his wit.

> "Life is generally sad. I'm not always melancholy. Sometimes I'm happy – happy as hell" **Don McLean**

What comes next? He doesn't know.

"I'm just trying to get my thoughts together now for another record that I'll probably record in five or six months. I have no idea what form or direction it will take.

"But I can promise you this. It won't be like anything I've already done. It certainly won't be another 'American Pie'."

Jim Smith

NME, 22 January 1972, page 11

DON McLEAN'S 'PIE'

DON McLEAN, currently topping the American Album and Singles Chart with "American Pie" (the album is of the same name), enters the NME singles chart at No. 28 this week.

He's an artist who's been trying for years and has suddenly been plunged into the biggest of the hit time and when I spoke to him over the transatlantic phone I asked if he had any plans to visit England:

"I'll get over there pretty soon, before the summer I hope. I'm really looking forward to it. I've never set foot outside the United States before."

"American Pie" is McLean's second album. His first, called "Tapestry" was released in about October 1970.

"It's not so simple to get yourself a record company interested in your work," he said.

"I must have tried dozens of companies before I eventually found someone who was interested. Media Arts was my first company; I've only been with United Artists for six months."

"You can bet the others are kicking themselves now."

Don's been playing and writing songs since 1964, but has only been on the road for about the last four. He's travelled over most of America and Canada in that time and built up a select amount of fans throughout the U.S.

But since the success of his million-seller his life has naturally changed. Instead of playing to small club audiences he's now topping the bill at huge halls and drawing crowds large enough to fill them too.

P.H.

NME, 22 January 1972, page 6

AMERICA the beautiful

America's home in the country is hardly luxurious. Down in bleakest Herts countryside Gerry Beckley, Dan Peek and Dewey Bunnell choose to live in a dilapidated old farm labourer's cottage just outside a village of the type normally described as 'sleepy'.

Inside the house, America were taking a day off. In a tiny, dark room lit only by an electric fire the group were taking the opportunity to play some rough old tapes recorded long before they thought of making hit records.

"In fact, the success of our single took us completely by surprise," remarked Dewey. "When we got back from our tour of Holland we were amazed to find 'Horse With No Name' in the charts."

The fact that the three American expats live together is not surprising. They met at school and became friends long before they thought of forming a group. Each had a background of American servicemen's families and a history of moving around the world.

"It all happened one night when we got together over a crate of beer and a couple of acoustic guitars," said Dewey. "Everything fell into place. I suppose you could say the candle was lit. Straight off we arranged the song 'Children' which later appeared on the album."

Each had been writing songs on their own and so the newly-formed America had a stockpile of material to work on. There followed a spell of going round record companies playing to anybody who'd listen, which led to a record contract and signing with their manager, DJ Jeff Dexter.

Almost straight off they landed a string of appearances with Elton John at the Roundhouse, with The Faces at The Oval, and on a Cat Stevens tour.

Said Gerry, "I think there's a feeling in the business that if you don't go through two years of slogging through the clubs you don't get hardened as a musician.

"But let's face it, the only way fresh music comes on the scene is if it happens the way it happened with us. If we'd spent years playing clubs the music would hardly be fresh."

In the early days of their career they were dogged by comparisons with Crosby, Stills & Nash. Now their standard reply to such criticisms is a half-smiled, "Crosby, Stills & Nash sound like us."

> **"At first we concentrated on acoustic music because we couldn't afford any electric instruments" Dan Peek**

Why though, I asked, has there been such a concentration on acoustic music so far?

"At first we just couldn't afford any electrical instruments," replied Dan. "Now it seems to come naturally. We write and arrange acoustically and whenever we try it any other way it just doesn't seem to fit."

"Really I don't see why there should be such a distinction between acoustic and electric groups anyway," said Dewey. "They're both intertwined. We would all like America just to be known as a group – period."

In spite of the closeness of the group as personalities they find it impossible to write any songs together. Each number on both the album and the single is credited to just one member of the group.

"On the occasions we've tried to write together the concept involved has just been too much. We seem to work best by one of us bringing a song to the others which is then arranged between the three of us." said Dan

At present the group's thoughts are concentrated on a tour of the States arranged for February. Although they are all American they've spent little time in the States in the last few years. Musically, they are almost unknown.

"It's going to be weird," mused Dewey. "I suppose we go to sleep each night thinking about it. We don't know what to expect but we're not expecting very much."

"Whatever happens, I think we'll always base ourselves in Britain," said Gerry. "We started here, we live here and a lot of the music business is consolidated here.

"Britain feels as much like home as anywhere else. When we're in the States I'm sure I'll get homesick for London."

James Johnson

SINGLE

NME, 20 November 1971, p16

AMERICA
A Horse With No Name
Warner Brothers

An atmospheric piece about a guy who's wandering in the burning desert. Basically the melody is no more than a repetitive riff, but its insistence intensifies the sombre aura. There's a jogging rhythm, some attractive acoustic guitar and colourful harmonies. This is a maxi-single, with three tracks taken from the trio's 'Sandman' album.

The right to bear arms: (l-r) Dan Peek Gerry Beckley, Dewey Bunnell

REDFERNS/HENRY DILTZ-CORBIS

PAUL SIMON
Paul Simon
CBS

NME, 8 January 1972, page 12

Apart from the immediacy of the material, the first thing that strikes you when listening to this, the first album that Paul Simon has recorded since severing his partnership with Art Garfunkel, is that you don't – not even for one minute – miss the latter's presence.

No disrespect to Garfunkel's talent, but on this album Simon has attempted and achieved all those things that his namesake McCartney has been endeavouring to perpetuate – with only limited artistic success since he too decided to go it alone.

As a lyricist Paul Simon has the consummate ability to pen highly-descriptive documentaries, either observations or autobiographical, which he then enhances with easily-absorbed melodies which range from sheer delicacy to hard bluesy rockers. And this trait is more than evident throughout the entire album.

When I spoke to Simon during his recent stop-over in London, he admitted to being more than satisfied with his efforts, but didn't show undue concern over how it might be received when he stated:

"As far as records are concerned people are always making comparisons. When I put out this new album, it's inevitable that people must compare it to when I sang with Artie and to what I wrote on the 'Bridge Over Troubled Water' album. So what? It doesn't matter. It's their prerogative to stand up and boo when they don't like it and scream when they love it."

Though for the sake of controversy, there will be those who will thumb their noses and align themselves to the former opinion, I feel confident that it will prove to be a demonstrative majority who will be responsible for making this album emulate the same kind of sales figures enjoyed by the 'Bridge' album.

You don't, not even for one minute, miss the presence of Art Garfunkel

Recorded in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Paris, the opening cut 'Mother And Child Reunion' was recorded in Kingston, Jamaica with a host of local musicians.

A potential single and a song which I'm sure will warrant many covers, it features Simon adding an almost Jimmy Cliff inflection in his voice over a pronounced reggae beat.

Quite a departure from his usual accepted style, for girlie voices led by Cissy Houston swell out the hook-line chorus.

This is followed by 'Duncan', a poor-country-boy-comes-to-the-big-city saga sung in Simon's familiar lonesome detached voice. With his flair for subtle underplay, he describes Duncan as having "*Holes in my confidence/ Holes in the knees of my jeans*". Having befriended a girl lay-preacher, he surrenders his innocence thus: "*Well, she took me to the woods/Saying here comes something and it feels so good/And just like a dog I was befriended*".

'Everything Put Together Falls Apart' is two minutes of intimacy with Simon's guitar supplement by Larry Knetchel on harmonium and electric piano. A very relaxed, almost throwaway performance. With a classic three guitar, drums plus vibraphone backing, 'Run That Body Down' is a domestic two-way conversation which, when you read between the lines, infers more than it reveals.

'Armistice Day' concludes the first side and among the back-up musicians are BS&T horn player Fred Lipsius and Miles Davis' Brazillian percussionist Airto Moreira.

The second side opens with a very commercially-oriented song, 'Me And Julio Down By The Schoolyard', which has more than just a passing touch of the 'La Bamba' concept. It's the kind of song you would expect Shirley 'The Clapping Song' Ellis to excel on because the scan of Simon's lyrics are quite masterful.

'Peace Like A River' is very intense, has some nice guitar licks creeping in behind the multi-dubbed voices.

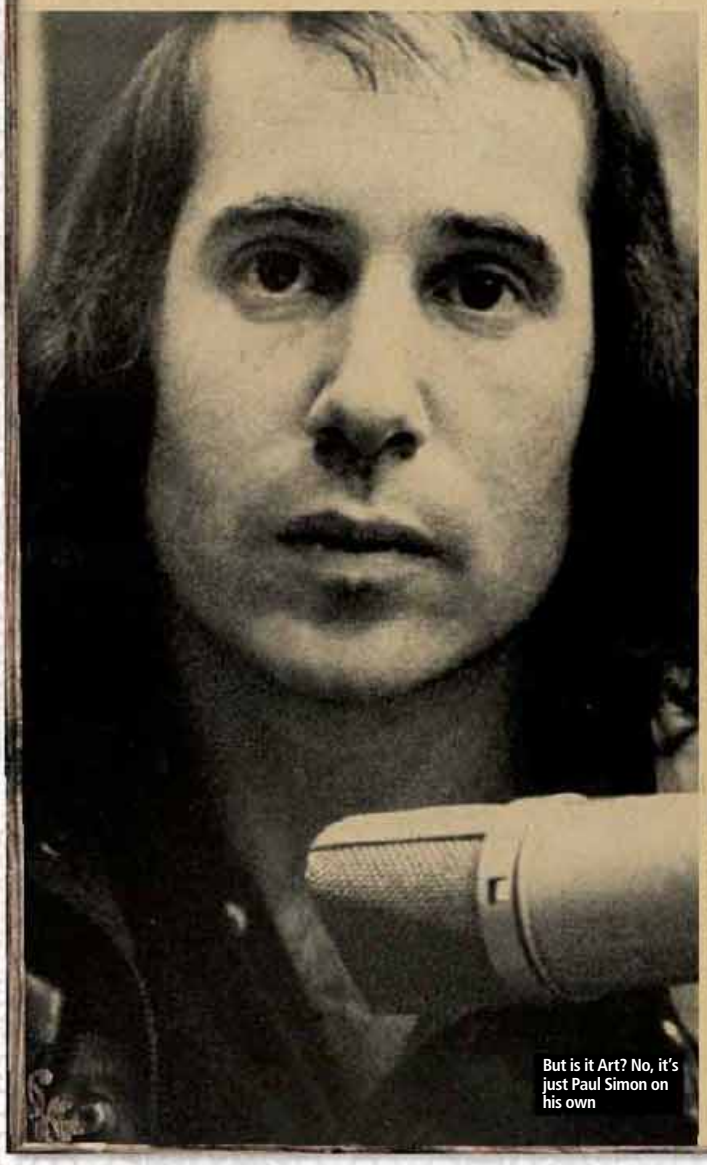
'Papa Hobo' features Knetchel yet again in company with Carlie McCoy on harmonica and jazz violinist Stephane Grappelli working their way through a syncopated progression depth; he doesn't waste a word. A perfect example being: "*It's carbon monoxide/The ole Detroit perfume*". Nuff said.

'Hobo Blues' is a short instrumental which brings back memories of the Hot Club Of France recordings. 'Paranoia Blues' is a thumper with staccato horn punctuations and some excellent bottleneck guitar interjections from Stefan Grossman. This song in many ways sums up the syndrome that exists in America…whether this is autobiographical or the observations of a friend, is up to you to decide.

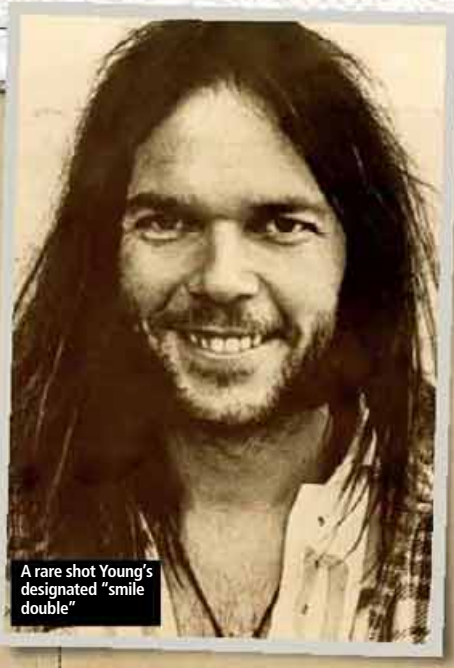
'Congratulations' brings the album to a close and this country soul song again could come in for a lot of cover versions for it has a great deal of meaning in the lyrical content.

It has been a long wait since the 'Bridge' album, but Paul Simon is a writer who firmly believes in quality as opposed to quantity and within the context of this album there is suffice to sustain the listener until he chooses to collate another folio of his work.

Roy Carr



But is it Art? No, it's just Paul Simon on his own



A rare shot Young's designated "smile double"

NEIL YOUNG
Harvest
Reprise

MM, 19 February 1972, page 23

The Mona Lisa has nothing on Neil Young. Enigmatic is probably too precise a word for a man whose songs defy any attempt to pin him down.

He is all things to all men: loner, martyr, Christ-figure, poet, mystic. The archetypal, all-purpose outsider, with whom any screwed-up, alienated kid can identify and through whom countless more can wallow in sweet, vicarious sadness.

He is also one of rock's greatest songwriters, wrapping up small nuggets of truth and pain and beauty in melodies which have the haunting simplicity of songs half-remembered from childhood and lyrics which, like the best songs of Dylan and Lennon, can be interpreted on many different levels.

It is the elusiveness, the mysteriousness, of many of Young's songs, which makes them so precious. Because they are not explicit, each listener can interpret them in a way which is meaningful to him or her. Listening to the songs on this album, I find it impossible to set down on paper what any of them is really about. Yet meaning is there, to be divined instinctively.

A few of the songs, superficially at least, are more explicit than others. 'The Needle And The Damage Done', recorded live at the UCLA, California, is a quietly poignant lament for a dead addict. 'Alabama' seems to continue the theme of 'Southern Man' on his previous album, albeit more obliquely and less angrily. 'A Man Needs A Maid' is about the pain of love, of being involved, and the impossibility of living without it: "*To give a love, you gotta live a love/To live a love, you gotta be 'part of' ".*

The other songs are harder to pin down. They tell of joy, sorrow, love, old age, half-described incidents and meetings –

REDFERNS

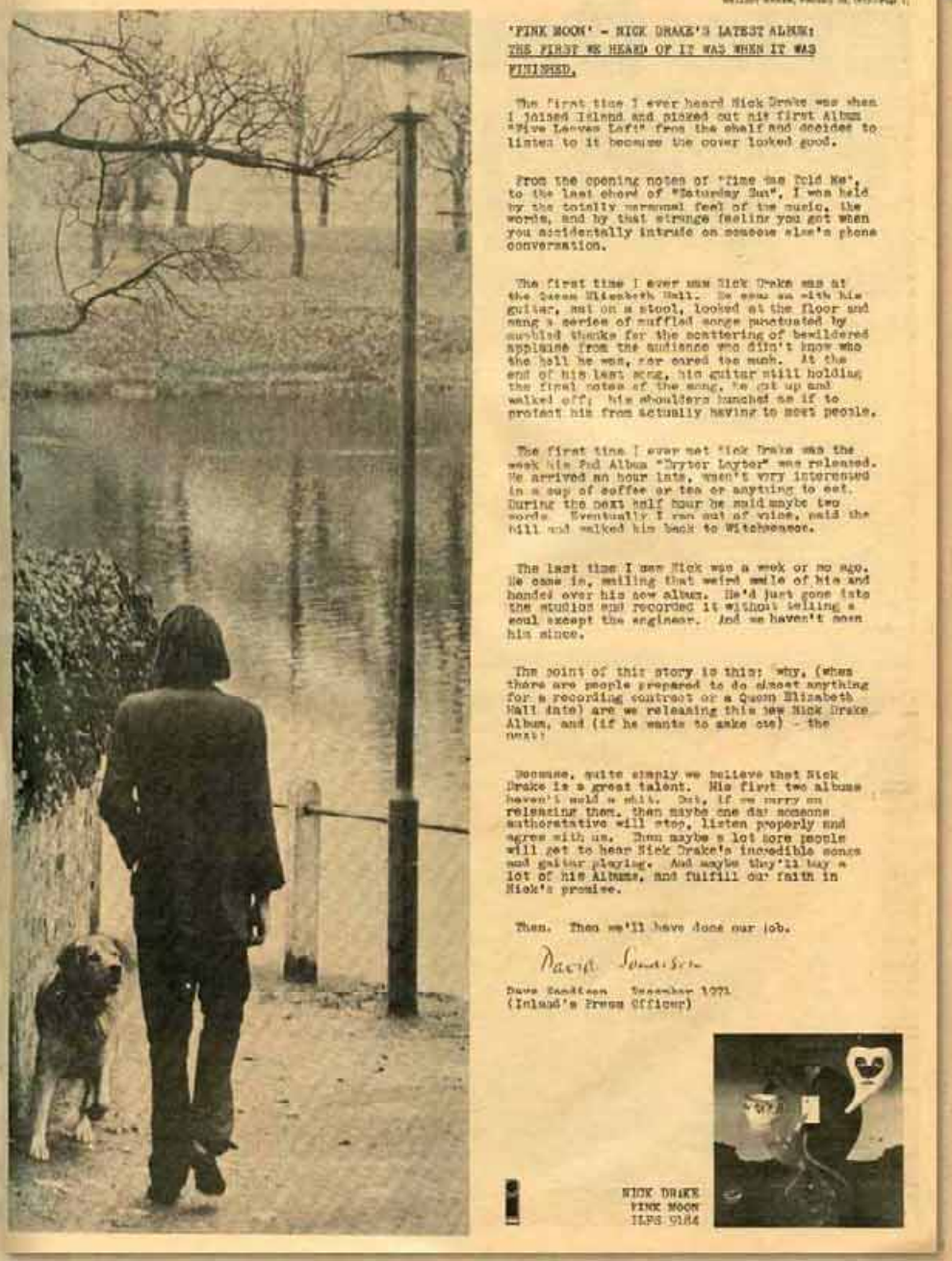
all expressed in oblique, fragmented lyrics which create an indefinable atmosphere of regret and nostalgia for a simpler, happier way of life which probably never existed. Musically, the songs here hold few surprises, except for 'A Man Needs A Maid' and 'There's A World' which were recorded with the London Symphony Orchestra at London's Barking Town Hall, with some majestic string arrangements by Jack Nitzsche. The rest feature the fairly familiar mixture of plangent rhythm guitar, woodchopping drums, stinging lead guitar and touches of steel, harmonica and piano. Young's accompanists are Stray Gators: Ben Keith (steel), Kenny Buttrey (drums), Tim Drummond (bass), and Jack Nitzsche (piano and slide guitar) with occasional vocal support from Crosby, Stills, Nash, James Taylor and Linda Ronstadt. Melodically, Young's songs seem to have been getting gradually simpler and some of the songs here, notably 'Heart Of Gold' and 'Are You Ready For The Country' are simple to the point of being facile.

And yet… he makes them work. That desolate, vulnerable, painful voice, the song and the arrangement come together as they do on 'A Man Needs A Maid' and the result is… frightening. ***Alan Lewis***

JUDEE SILL
Judee Sill
Asylum

MM, 19 February 1972, page 23

Judee is one of those breed of American girls who have taken to singing that one supposes were previously engaged in quietly knitting at home and rocking gently back and forth on the chair in the porch. Now Judee, and dozens like her, have quietly put down their knitting, placed their spectacles firmly on the end of their snub noses, and taken up the acoustic guitar, bent on putting their bubbling thoughts into song. This musical manifestation of women's lib has been of great value and importance, and shows that while the menfolk have been bawling their gauche and inarticulate lyrics these past four score years and ten, the Judees have been storing up a treasure house of poetry and song. Judee has a more American voice than Joni Mitchell, and she gently rolls her Rs around with an attractive swinging motion. Her lyrics have a homely but none the less imaginative quality, as she sings of phantom cowboys and Jesus. One of the best songs here is 'Jesus Was A Cross Maker', which was produced by Graham Nash. She interprets each song with a gentle firmness that probably surprises her kin-folk; Her accompaniment is strictly non-rock, but the orchestrations retain a funky yet tasteful flavour, and even swing a mite here and there. She tends to be rather limited in her choice of keys and her moods are mainly introspective, without the flashes of humour one welcomes in Miss Mitchell. But a beautiful and highly recommended album. ***Chris Welch***



'PINK MOON' - NICK DRAKE'S LATEST ALBUM:
THE FIRST WE HEARD OF IT WAS WHEN IT WAS FINISHED.

The first time I ever heard Nick Drake was when I joined Island and picked out his first Album "Five Leaves Left" from the shelf and decided to listen to it because the cover looked good.

From the opening notes of "Time Has Told Me", to the last chord of "Saturday Sun", I was held by the totally unusual feel of the music, the words, and by that strange feeling you get when you accidentally intrude on someone else's phone conversation.

The first time I ever saw Nick Drake was at the Queen Elizabeth Hall. He came on with his guitar, sat on a stool, looked at the floor and sang a series of muffled songs punctuated by mumbled thanks for the scattering of bewildered applause from the audience who didn't know who the hell he was, nor cared too much. At the end of his last song, his guitar still holding the final notes of the song, he got up and walked off; his shoulders hunched as if to protect his from actually having to meet people.

The first time I ever met Nick Drake was the week his 2nd Album "Bryter Layter" was released. He arrived an hour late, wasn't very interested in a cup of coffee or tea or anything to eat. During the next half hour he said maybe two words. Eventually I ran out of wine, paid the bill and walked him back to Witchseance.

The last time I saw Nick was a week or so ago. He came in, smiling that weird smile of his and handed over his new album. He'd just gone into the studios and recorded it without telling a soul except the engineer. And we haven't seen him since.

The point of this story is this: why, (when there are people prepared to do almost anything for a recording contract or a Queen Elizabeth Hall date) are we releasing this new Nick Drake Album, and (if he wants to make one) - the next?

Because, quite simply we believe that Nick Drake is a great talent. His first two albums haven't sold a shit. But, if we carry on releasing them, then maybe one day someone authoritative will stop, listen properly and agree with us. Then maybe a lot more people will get to hear Nick Drake's incredible songs and guitar playing. And maybe they'll buy a lot of his albums, and fulfill our faith in Nick's promise.

Then. Then we'll have done our job.

Dave Sanderson December 1971
(Island's Press Officer)

NICK DRAKE
Pink Moon
Island

NME, 1 April 1972, page 19

John Martyn told me about Nick Drake in ecstatic terms and so it seemed the natural thing to do to bag the album when it came in for review. It is hard to say whether John was right or not. His music is so personal and shyly presented both lyrically and in his confined guitar and piano playing that it neither does nor doesn't come over. Drake is a fairly mysterious person, no one appears to know where he lives, what he does – apart from writing songs – and there is not even a chance to see him on stage to get closer to his insides. In places he is a cult figure, and among the new younger sixth form and college audience there are pockets that go overboard to catch the latest glimmer of news that moves along the verbal news meanderings. The more you listen to Drake though, the more compelling his music becomes – but all the time it hides from you. On 'Things Behind The Sun', he sings to me, embarrassed and shy.

One should play Drake's albums with the sound off and just look at the cover

Perhaps one should play his albums with the sound off and just look at the cover and make the music in your head reciting his words from inside the cover to your own rhythmic heart rhymes.

Nick Drake does not exist at all. Four lines of 'Know' – *"Know that I love you, know that I care/ Know that I see you, know I'm not there"*. It could be that Nick Drake does not exist at all.

Mark Plummer

LUNCH AND JUDEE

"I don't like reptiles anymore- they're so indifferent" Judee Sill took a spoonful of yoghurt and watched a man clambering on to the roof of the Italian Embassy.

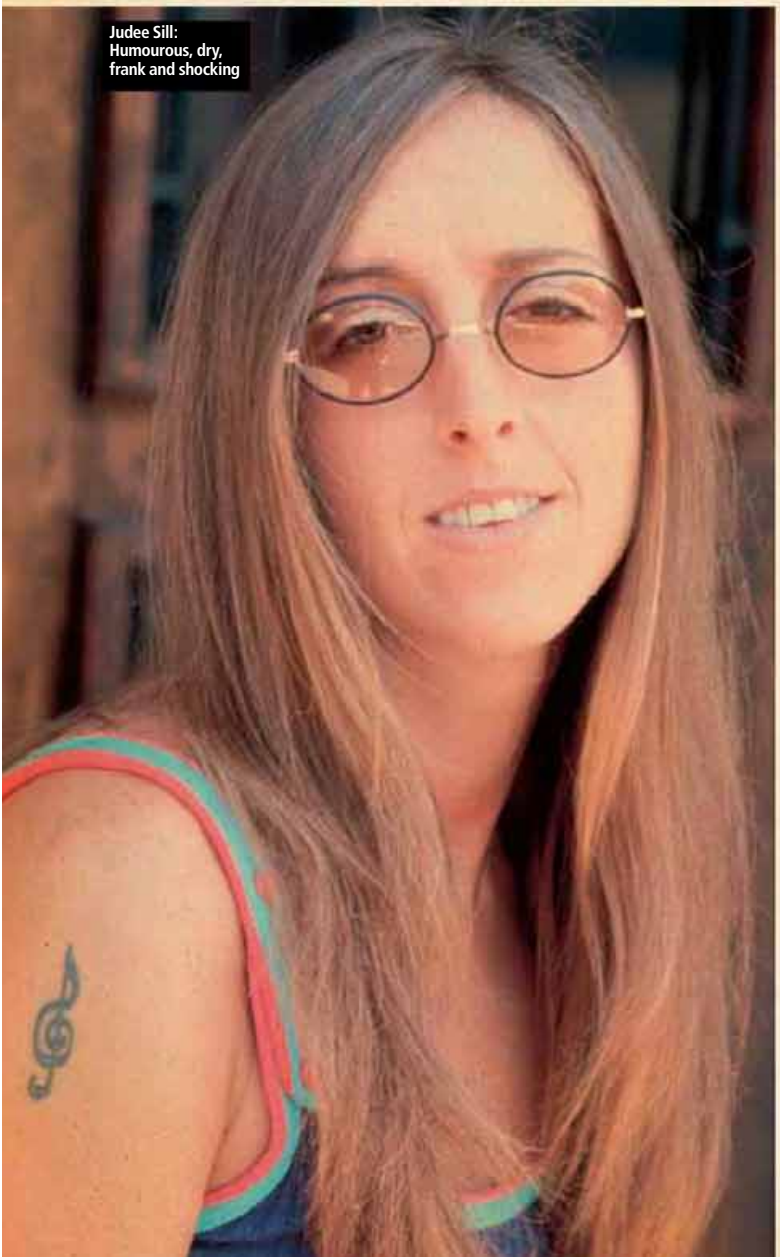
MM, 25 March 1972, page 20

She has just been discoursing on her past activities as lerpatologist when her attention was distracted. "That's the same man who was lying on the floor in my bedroom just now," she explained.

The small lunchtime gathering, inveigled for the purpose of eating salad and joining conversation with Miss Sill, a native Californian, looked puzzled. "Perhaps he is an electrician," suggests somebody.

Miss Sill is a firm young lady with a plump face, owl-like glasses and a business-like manner. Her conversation is college cultivated, humourous, dry and frank. At one point she stretched out her chair, gazed at the ceiling and uttered an expletive that would have shocked Germaine Greer. "Oh – that spoilt my image of you," sighed a youth, toying with the chives. Judee gently explained that she usually did her best to dispel her public image.

Judee is a singer-songwriter, who played a sellout concert with America at the Royal Festival Hall last weekend, and is here on the crest of the wave of interest in her debut album, just released on Asylum. She follows in the illustrious footsteps of Joni Mitchell, Judy Collins, Judy Henske, etc. "Yeah," she says thoughtfully. "Did you know there is a new female singer-songwriter who plays guitar called Joni Judy?"



Judee Sill: Humourous, dry, frank and shocking

Judee's album is a highly developed musical statement surprisingly mature and rounded for a debut performance. But as Judee hints, she has been around a long time and been through a vast number of maturing experiences. One of her problems in the States has been clumsy booking, being put on to open the show for teenybop rock acts.

"I really want to sell some albums so I don't have to do anymore and I can go out on my own. Please buy the albums!" she pleads."They keep putting me on with rock bands in the States, which is appalling. It really is the limit. I come on and there's 11,000 screaming groupies taking reds (*amphetamines*) and red wines, and they are only there for one thing – sex. They don't want music, that's the last thing they want, and it's really depressing.

"In fact, I opened for (*famous rock group*) and I nearly puked, it was so terrible. I just told them to shut up or I'd give them five dollars and tell them to buy some reds and go to the nearest bowling alley. And they all scream (*at the famous rock group*) 'Get your pants off!' Well, that's what they *think*."

What did Judee do in her formative years?

"I went to college and studied Pythagorean musical theory. I had strong ideas that I wanted to put into songs, ideas on religion that I hardly ever talk about because I say them so much better in my songs."

One of Judee's most popular songs from the album is 'Jesus Was A Cross Maker' produced for her by Graham Nash, which specifies the Sills style – gentle, melodic, mysterious.

"It's not a religious song, it's about a bandit, who stole my love. In fact, it's an unrequited love song about a romantic bummer of great magnitude! One of the biggest romantic bummers of my life. Yes, he's heard it – we're good friends now."

Apart from the rock venues, where else has Judee worked?

"I have done every single folk club in America. And that's not many. There are only about five in the whole of the North American continent."

It struck me that Judee was being diplomatically vague about her pre-album activities, especially as she admitted to leaving high school as long ago as 1962.

"After that, I don't know what I was doing, apart from leading a life of crime and drug addiction."

I laughed heartily at this amusing jest.

"He's laughing! He thinks I'm joking! I didn't do it just so it would make me a great songwriter. I've always enjoyed writing songs, even when I was little. I used to think it was some kind of curse. My father used to run a bar and he had a jukebox that played pop music from the '50s. It was terrible…" At this point there came a shocking interruption from one of the party hanging onto Judee's words.

"That was the greatest music ever," opined a mortified gentleman pushing away his cottage cheese untouched.

Unaffected by this outburst, Judee continued her rapid narration. "Well, I've spent all my life trying to improve the corny melodies in my head. I actually write my songs backwards. I take a climax and then I build up to the introduction. Cass Elliot did 'Jesus Was A Cross Maker'. She did it with a trumpet section. Really showbusiness."

"After high school, I don't know what I was doing, apart from leading a life of crime and drug addiction"

Talking of Cass Elliot, how come Graham Nash got to produce 'Cross Maker'?

"He's with my management," said Judee. "I didn't know Graham before we did the track, but we're friends now and I have worked on the same bill as him and Dave Crosby. I remember vividly playing with them at a wrestling stadium. They had a sign outside which read: 'Graham Nash, David Crosby And Judee Sill Wrestling at 8pm.'"

Her bold spirit and humour is something of an object lesson for those happy to rot amidst the temptations of rock. Her father died many years ago, followed by her mother, who suffered from alcoholism. Her brother died of pneumonia.

Judee raised a glass of red wine and drank a toast: "Excelsior, onwards and upwards," she cried. ***Chris Welch***

HENRY DILTZ-CORBIS/REDFERNS

COHEN
behind the enigma

NME, 25 March 1972, page 20

Of all the singer-songwriters to emerge in the last five years, Leonard Cohen is the most unique. His style is highly individual and his way of creating lyrics is literary. But then, that isn't surprising for a man who was already a prize-winning poet and published novelist before his albums sold widely enough to make him an international name in the third-stream of contemporary music, the area between folk and pop.

Cohen is currently visiting Britain. He opened last Saturday in Dublin and on the Sunday I met him at his hotel. Of his creative life, he told me: "The kind of interest my songs created meant that for some time I found myself moving into that area, to the exclusion of the other forms. But now I'm getting back to the older forms. I've just finished a new book of poems."

Of songwriting, Cohen commented: "When you finish a song you can present it immediately in a finished way. Most of the songs I've recorded in the last three years came out of one extremely fertile period when I wrote about 100 songs, and I've taken them and moved them around.

"But that phase is over now and I've begun working on a new kind of song. When I think of songs, I think beyond the one I've got. I'm into one now that I think is great."

Cohen writes the kind of songs that send people off theorising as to their meaning. "Establishing a theme in a song comes later," said Cohen. "I don't really know what it is any more than I know what the theme of my life is, or anybody else's is. I don't know what the themes of my songs are.

"If I had some very special message to lay across I wouldn't hesitate to do so if I thought it would make the work easier, but I don't have such a message."

Asked how much the happenings and events in his own life have influenced his writing, he replied: "My life seems empty, it doesn't have many events, so the song has to come out of some other place. It's not an event and it's not a message, it's another kind of colour."

Did he apply the same technique in song-writing as in poetry-writing? "It's basically like a courting process, like hunting women. Most of the time it's a hassle. And you feel you're not really getting as much as you should, and you're unsatisfied. And from time to time there doesn't seem to be anything you can do. Of course from time to time you connect. The time you don't connect, you just kind of scratch."

"My voice just happens to be monotonous. I'm somewhat whiney, so they are called sad songs. It's a complete biological accident that my songs sound melancholy when I sing them."

The interpretation placed on Cohen's songs vary from listener to listener. What people make of his songs often surprises him.

"But the songs are empty, and you can put into them what you want to put into them. My voice just happens to be monotonous, I'm somewhat whiney, so they are called sad songs. But you could sing them joyfully too. It's a completely biological accident that my songs sound melancholy when I sing them."

He talked about concerts – the sell-out Dublin one in particular. "I don't want to pretend I was the man who was writing those songs in a room. I'd already written them. I don't lay some dramatic trip on them about how I felt as I wrote them at the desk. At the concert I wasn't at the desk. I was singing songs they knew. I don't want to pretend we live every single moment of the song."

Did he enjoy working in public? "This is the second time I've done it. It's hard to say anything about it because it went very easy last night, so I'm tempted to say it's easy. But if it's a wipe-out in Glasgow, I'll develop some sob story about it."

Recalling his first public appearance Cohen said that it was terrifying. "I couldn't finish the song. I couldn't tune the guitar. I thought it must be my ears. The guitar must be in tune. I started singing and I couldn't finish the song, I had to excuse myself.

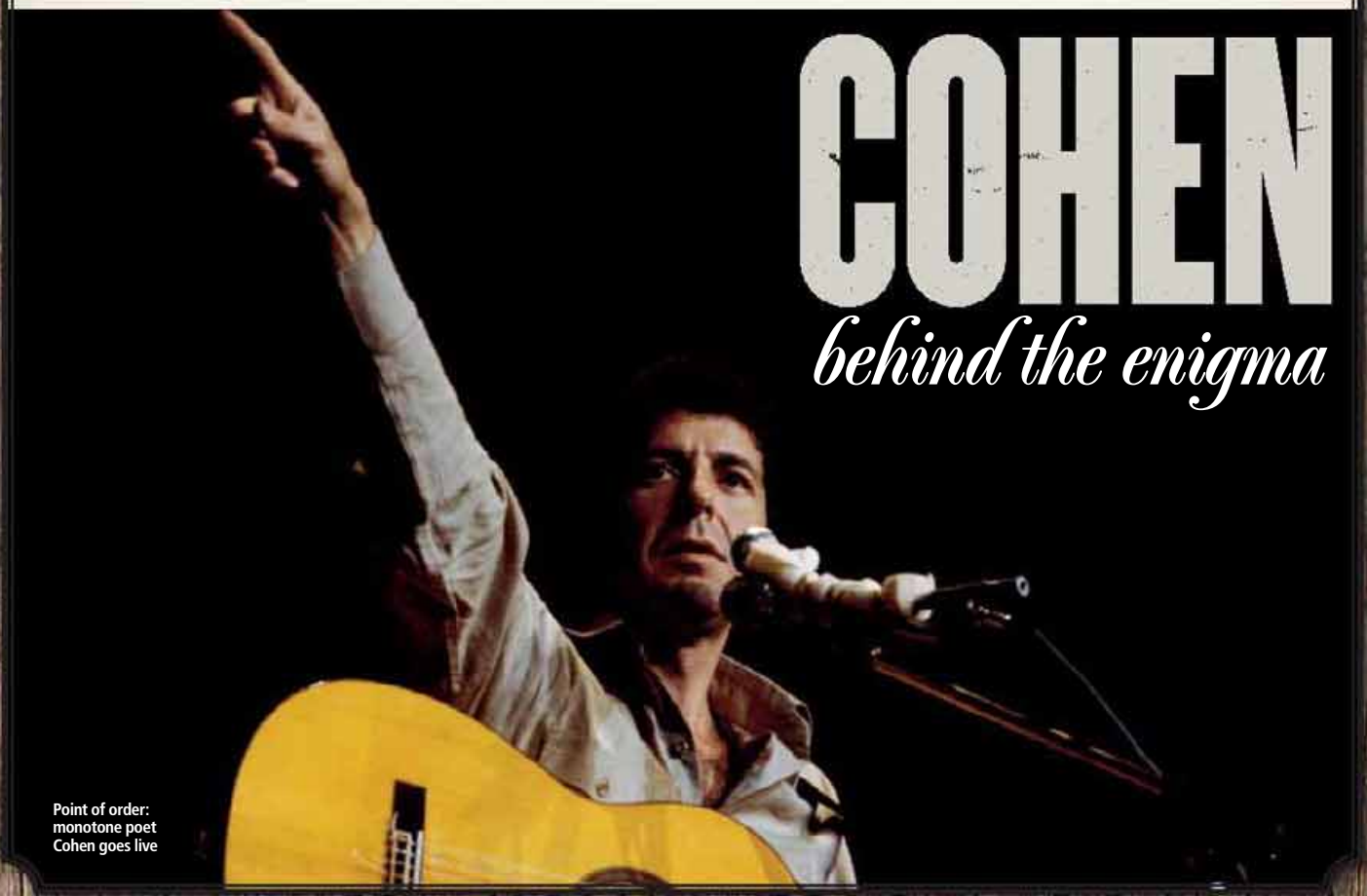
"But a live performance gives you a chance to put your character on the line. There are a lot of things you can do on stage. You can sell it to the audience, you can withdraw, you can indulge in many kinds of fantasies.

"And it's always a very interesting test of character, because you know when you are betraying yourself."

During the course of the Dublin show, Cohen was asked to recite some of his poetry, He obliged with an amusing three-liner written to a girl some years ago.

"I never really enjoyed myself doing poetry from the stage, but I'm sorry I didn't have a book of poems with me because people were so hospitable and interested and I did feel so relaxed. I might just have said, 'Well here are some poems I've written, if you want to hear them.'

"But it's something that smacks a bit of the Sunday school, kind of ramming something down people's throats. My own collected emotions are best kept between two hard covers." ***Tony Wilson***



Point of order: monotone poet Cohen goes live

JACKSON BROWNE

Folk romantic Jackson Browne is one of music's true survivors, as the details of his fascinating life story make abundantly clear

MM, 13 May 1972, page 10

If you haven't got Jackson Browne's album, why haven't you? And if you have you'll know that Jackson is a romanticist; not in the horribly slushy sense of the word, but insofar as his songs effect deep emotional responses. Not Hollywood romance; just the romance of being young and an idealist before the puppy's milk turns sour.

The virtue of Browne's music is that it does not come bedecked and garlanded but that it magnificently conveys corny themes like the death of a young friend or the loss of innocence. In these he vivifies the cliché and makes it meaningful.

This makes him sound rather like Joni Mitchell, with whom he's currently appeaing in Britain. But Jackson is less exposed, less fragile – not at all a stricken creature.

In his song 'Jamaica Say You Will', he loses the chick, but you know he'll survive. In 'Song For Adam', in which the narrator and the subject of the song go their divergent ways, the latter eventually to die, he's the one who's the survivor, left to ponder the meaning of the relationship.

"I'm a great romantic," he admits. "I think I probably started playing 'cos I like serenading the guitar. Some people see themselves on the football field, I see myself strumming songs."

Jackson Browne is this skinny little kid with a lean, bony face and big, doe eyes, sitting across the table in this restaurant. He's now 23.

At his Festival Hall concert on Sunday evening this girl in the row behind me whispered, "He's very young, isn't he?" He sure looks it. But an air of self-containment, even diffidence, gives him away. His romanticism is of the imagination, not the appearance.

He was born, curiously enough, in Heidelberg, where his father was working on the American paper there, *Stars And Stripes*. They went back to the States when he was three, and he grew up in LA. His career as a musician evolved though the usual process, playing at school and then in clubs in Orange County on the West Coast. Eventually, he got dollars signing for a publishing company and went to New York where he lived off friends.

It was during this period in 1967 that he accompanied Nico on guitar at the Dom in Greenwich Village. He's slightly contemptuous of the way people now refer to his association with Nico – "Why the stuff about Nico? Before this year no one had heard of what I did with her!" In fact, he played with her for several weeks and several of his songs were featured on her first album 'Chelsea Girl'.

"When I played there at first the Dom was nothing. Nothing until Warhol heard about it and realised it was 'mod' spelt backwards. Then he had all sorts of things done to it, continuous loops and such. It was really a bad gig for me. I was scared to death, scared to death." He shook his head at the thought.

"For one thing, I was always scared to death of Lou Reed, y'know. He was really heavy, I thought. Then the one time I got to talk to him it was after Nico recorded and he was a really nice guy, I found out. And she was so beautiful." He paused. "Just a knockout. A cross between… oh, I dunno.

"They wanted her singing in a plastic box with pre-recorded tapes, 'cos she was leaving the Velvets. It was after 'Chelsea Girl' that she wanted to go out and play. She read my songs off a piece of paper, I remember. I really liked 'Marble Index' but it's a pity my songs were on 'Chelsea Girl,' 'cos her own are so poetic. I think she's so much better doing music she's written."

The following year, in '68, he signed for Elektra, and began recording his album, but pretty soon found his own efforts were being swallowed by the idea of a group project.

This involved himself and several other hopeful Elektra talents heading out to the country with a Wally Heider-mobile and playing on each others songs. They all christened it the "Phantasy Repertory Company." They were, he recalls, "pretty high all the time." Nothing ultimately ever materialised. Then, for a couple of years he didn't do anything very much: "I just sat around. I did hoots at the Troubadour in LA. I got offers to record but I felt I wasn't good enough. It just wasn't right."

Other artists, however, were becoming aware of his songwriting talent, like Tom Rush and the American Steve Noonan, who used Jackson's numbers on their albums. The now-defunct magazine Cheeta lumped him together with Tim Buckley and Steve Noonan on the grounds that they grew up in the same area of Southern California and called them the "Orange County Three." Since then there has arisen the assumption that Browne was part of a band of that name. "It seemed like I was trying to make it by association with these two, and it was embarrassing. Tim Buckley I only knew from a few days' hitching."

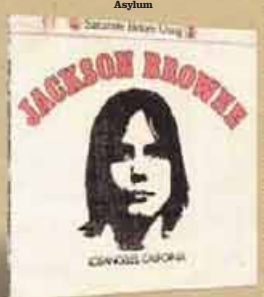
Noonan, who made an album called simply 'Steve Noonan' in March '68, he did know. "He's now got a wife and kid and lives in Santa Cruz, without a care, which is sort of why I envy him. After all, in the beginning people just play to entertain themselves. Eventually there's another responsibility – to your fans. You don't want them to think you've failed, when all the while you're laying back at your house and having a good time away from the scene."

He personally had acquired enough reputation, however, to make the trip to Britain in '71. He arrived with Laura Nyro at more or less exactly this time last year. They played together but his name caused few ripples. And his attempts to record here proved abortive (out of them, however, rose an association with guitarist Albert Lee, whom Jackson used on his album when Lee was out in LA).

He'd already met Elliot Roberts, however, a co-owner with David Geffen of Asylum records, his current label. Subsequently he got down in earnest to making his first album – his first record, in fact.

"I was in deep straits when I met Elliot, so bad I was

JACKSON BROWNE
Jackson Browne
Asylum



MM, 25 March 1972, page 15

Although the word has been out for some four years, this is his first album, and it's good; so good, in fact, that it establishes him not just as a versatile songwriter but as an artist of major stature. For a debut album Browne could not have wished to achieve a more profound impact. Broadly speaking, his songs are romantic, heart-in-the-mouth affairs, but structured with such subtlety, earnestness and intensity of feeling that their cumulative effect is rather like a return to innocence. There are not more than a handful of singers around who can express a love song so exquisitely and touchingly, without a trace of cloying sentiment. On an album which is uniformly gorgeous there are several stand-outs. 'Jamaica Say You Will' opens the first side and also encapsulates the form of his writing. Jamaica is the daughter of a sea captain with whom the narrator has a romance, which finally ends when the captain returns from the sea to carry her off. The song embodies his compositional approach; he keeps his lines very uncluttered, eschewing obscurantist tendencies. Altogether, 'Jackson Browne' should do for Jackson Browne a whole lot more than 'Neil Young' did for Neil Young. If it's not this album, it will be the next. But it should be this one. It's got a brown cover. Don't pass it up.

Michael Watts

There are a handful of singers who can express a love song so exquisitely

thinking of being a chicken rancher in Bakersfield. I had no idea of what I was doing. I've been involved in these projects that hadn't come to anything.

"The thing was everyone had a certain amount of confidence in the songs but I couldn't sing 'em. It was very much a hit and miss affair, and I guess I'm still improving. I used to sing like I was choking to death." He laughed drily.

"One time I remember my manager's wife rushed into the room and said, 'Are you all right?' and I said, 'Yeah, it's OK, I'm just trying to do a new song.'" It was like that.

He found his voice through the ministrations of a Caruso freak named Warren Barigian, who gradually overcame his disability by physical manipulations which centre on his voice. "I pass out sometimes on this treatment. You might wake up crying or laughing. But this guy, he was into opera before and I turned him on to Chuck Berry."

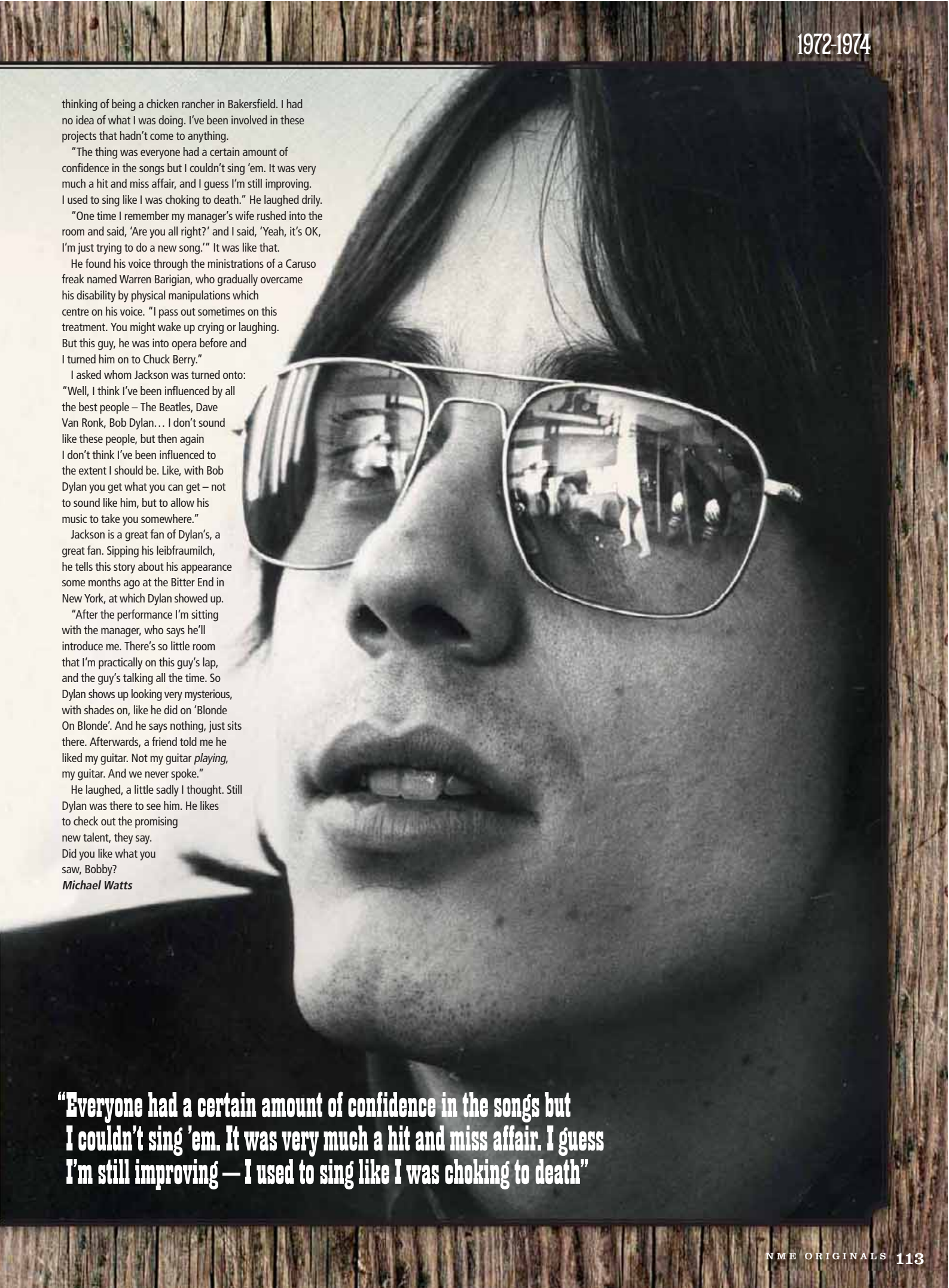
I asked whom Jackson was turned onto: "Well, I think I've been influenced by all the best people – The Beatles, Dave Van Ronk, Bob Dylan… I don't sound like these people, but then again I don't think I've been influenced to the extent I should be. Like, with Bob Dylan you get what you can get – not to sound like him, but to allow his music to take you somewhere."

Jackson is a great fan of Dylan's, a great fan. Sipping his leibfraumilch, he tells this story about his appearance some months ago at the Bitter End in New York, at which Dylan showed up.

"After the performance I'm sitting with the manager, who says he'll introduce me. There's so little room that I'm practically on this guy's lap, and the guy's talking all the time. So Dylan shows up looking very mysterious, with shades on, like he did on 'Blonde On Blonde'. And he says nothing, just sits there. Afterwards, a friend told me he liked my guitar. Not my guitar *playing*, my guitar. And we never spoke."

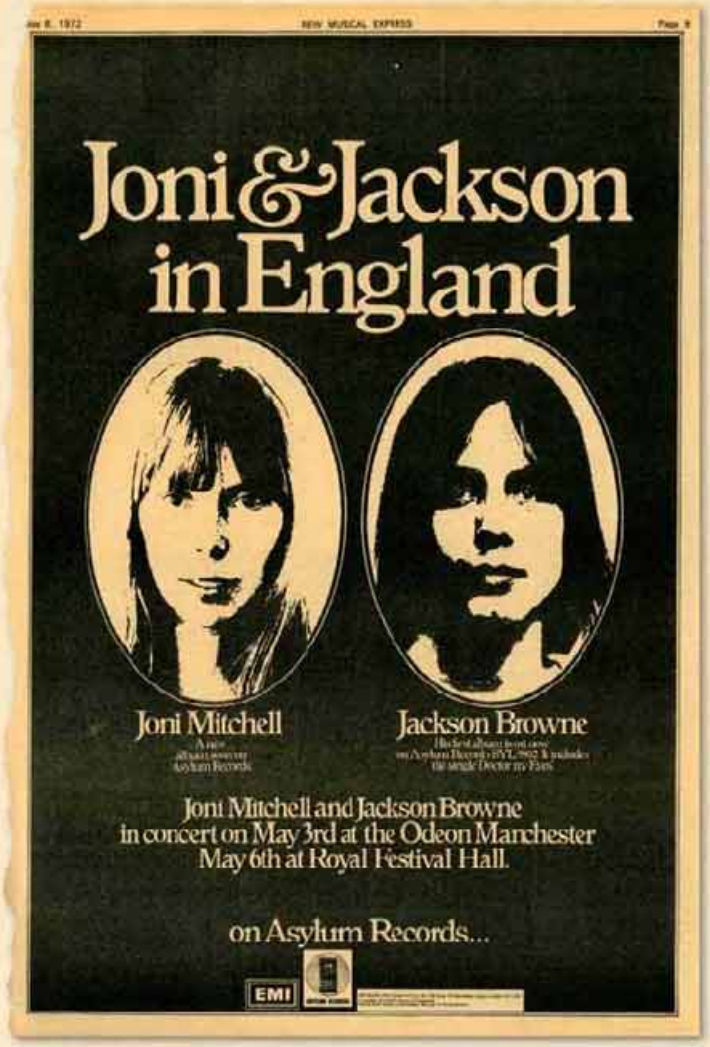
He laughed, a little sadly I thought. Still Dylan was there to see him. He likes to check out the promising new talent, they say. Did you like what you saw, Bobby?

Michael Watts



"Everyone had a certain amount of confidence in the songs but I couldn't sing 'em. It was very much a hit and miss affair. I guess I'm still improving — I used to sing like I was choking to death"

Joni Mitchell: "Not just a performer but an icon"


Joni & Jackson in England
Joni Mitchell
Jackson Browne
Joni Mitchell and Jackson Browne
in concert on May 3rd at the Odeon Manchester
May 6th at Royal Festival Hall.
on Asylum Records...
EMI

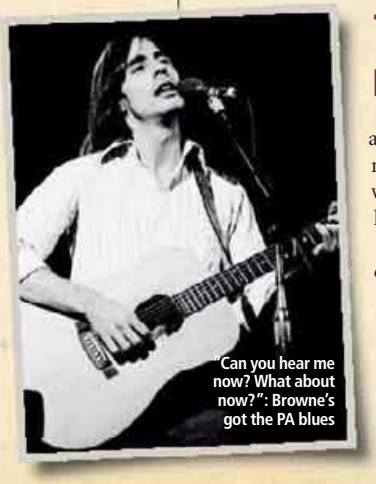
PRIESTESS JONI

MM, 13 May 1972, page 22

There was Jackson Browne, Joni Mitchell, and this third, malignant presence on stage at the Festival Hall on Friday. With no sense of regard for the crowded audience, this unwanted addition manifested itself by a series of whistles, screeches and hoots in the PA system, whose volume level was skittish to the point of perversity.

Poor old Jackson Browne. As soon as he got stuck into a song the sound would die on him, and he'd be left mouthing into the mike like some caricature from a silent movie. The mood of the audience passed from annoyance, to bewilderment, to slight amusement, and then through to pity as the kid wrestled with the problem of getting himself across. What I actually heard of him was great. The numbers were mainly off his album. It would be interesting, however, to hear him with a band backing him up, as I understand he works in the States.

For Joni Mitchell, the house PA replaced the one used on his set, but even so she sounded muffled in the higher registers. However… it's difficult to see how anybody can actively dislike Joni Mitchell. Her writing touches peaks of sensitivity, particularly on 'Ladies Of The Canyon' that no other songwriter can currently compare with. Her playing is direct and evocative, and her voice is magnificent, especially when when she soars on those high notes.



"Can you hear me now? What about now?": Browne's got the PA blues

To those who attend her concerts, Mitchell is virginal and vulnerable, not to be vilified. It seems almost like heresy to criticise her

To those who attend her concerts, however, she's much more than a singer and a songwriter. She's some kind of high priestess, virginal and vulnerable, not to be vilified. The effect was heightened on Friday by her appearance in long flowing culottes that dazzled white in the spotlights.

It seems almost like heresy to criticise her, but one fault to my mind is that the mood of her performances tends to be excessively devotional. When she sits down at the piano one knows the song is going to be melancholic, and when she takes up the guitar only slightly less downbeat. She becomes not just a performer but a kind of icon.

On Friday she sang more new songs than old, although there was the obligatory 'Big Yellow Taxi' and 'Clouds', and a beautiful version of 'For Free', which she explained was written about a New York street clarinetist. There were not the obvious songs about the men in her life. There was 'Blue' but not 'Willie'. Among the new songs was a comparatively light number inspired by a meal at Trader Cie's, and one called 'Song For Ludwig' (dedicated to Beethoven) which had lovely rolling piano lines.

The highlight of her act was a song whose title I didn't get but whose inspiration she went into at length.

That's exactly it. One wonders what so many of her compositions are like in their raw state. It would be interesting to hear them.

Michael Watts

REDFERNS/MICHAEL PUTLAND–RETNA

"A bloody amazing live band": Manassas rehearsing, 1972

STEPHEN STILLS
Manassas
Atlantic

NME, 29 April 1972, page 16

'Manassas' comes close to being the best thing Stills has ever recorded. It almost beats that first CS&N record in style and impact. But it's not the best because, although musicianship and arrangements are nearly flawless, the writing fails to maintain the standard.

It's still excellent. The group represents Stills' ennui with superstardom and his longfelt desire to funk it up a little with a good live band.

Manassas are a good live band by all accounts. Judging from the large amounts of almost frightening gunk to be found on the new double LP, they must be a bloody amazing live band.

They're a spicy fusion of Buffalos and Burritos, and include: Stills and Chris Hillman (guitar, vocals), Stills' perennial rhythm section Dallas Taylor and Fuzzy Samuels, Al Perkins (steel), Paul Harris (keyboards), and Joe Lala (percussion).

'Manassas' abounds with near-perfect playing – some of the nicest touches coming from Al Perkins. Oh yes, Stills plays good, too; weaving lead work and attacking wah-wah for the most part, and he also gets some nice dual-guitar duels together with Hillman.

To display Stills' various facets, the album is divided into four sections, each titled and each representing a different field of music: Country, soft-through-hard rock, Latin rock. Stills has also found a niche as a producer, and techniques on 'Manassas' abound with his new production ambitions.

The main problem is the writing. Numbers often start strongly, only to degenerate as ideas are exhausted. Stills is aware of his hang-up about follow-through, and here has tried to cope by dividing the music into four sections. Great idea: but it doesn't quite work.

The production is too samey to give a real sense of musical diversion, and some of the tracks are even interchangeable. Stills should just have written less. The multi-faceted image that he desires doesn't really come across.

A good example of good writing, good arrangement and good musicianship spoilt by over-indulgence can be found on 'The Treasure' (side four). Like 'Go Back Home' ('Stephen Stills I') it starts promisingly, builds well, arrives breathlessly at a climax, and then…blah. Anticlimax.

Stills is consistently a fine musician, and only sometimes a fine composer

The best section is the country side. The material is stronger and the style is better served by the loose production. Also this section is where Perkins, a fine steel-player, really shines.

If 'Manassas' proves anything, it's that Stills is consistently a fine musician, occasionally a fine arranger and only sometimes a fine composer. Never all three at once. But meanwhile this is more than enough to be going on with.

Tony Tyler

GRAHAM NASH & DAVID CROSBY
Graham Nash & David Crosby
Atlantic

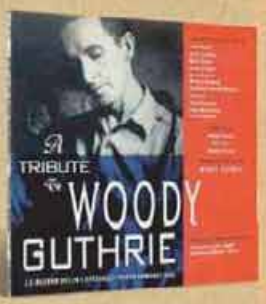
MM, 6 May 1972, page 18

The concept of this album seems cockeyed somehow. Six Graham Nash songs, five from Crosby, no co-written tracks, and no thread holding it together.

Crosby tracks sound like Crosby and friends with Graham putting on some piano and harmonies. Graham's songs sound the same, only with Crosby putting on his bits. Perhaps neither of them had enough songs written to complete a full album, so they got together to make this between them. Or could it be that they just need an arranger like Stephen Stills to convert their songs from near-demos into something approaching the finesse that made 'Déjà Vu' such an outstanding album?

As musicians and as songwriters neither Crosby nor Nash have the power and perception for simplicity that Neil Young carries off so well. They are very much the backing men who have moved out of their restrictive seats to start making their own music. Not a bad thing to do – but so much lavish praise has been heaped on them that the whole validity of rock music is cast in doubt. Would Kinney have taken these tracks if they had come from a couple of unknowns from the Haight? ***Mark Plummer***

VARIOUS ARTISTS
A Tribute To Woody Guthrie
CBS/Warner Bros



MM, 13 May 1972, page 25

It speaks for itself. How many songwriters have there been that have had Guthrie's influence? More specifically, how many songwriters could write such versatile material? Like so many influential writers Woody Guthrie took his inspiration from his immediate environment and from the traditions that had gone before him. He came up with emotions held in common by thousands, if not millions. His songs have become more common property, synonymous with folk. Perhaps it shouldn't surprise anyone that performers so different in their styles as, for instance, Bob Dylan, Judy Collins, Richie Havens and Odetta should all be able to adapt Guthrie's songs so finely to their own requirements. These two albums, compiled from live recordings, are no ethnic Library Of Congress museum pieces. They live, just as surely as the subjects Woody wrote about. The recordings are the result of two "Tribute To Woody" concerts. The first was held at Carnegie Hall NYC, in January 1968 – soon after Woody died in October 3, 1967, with Huntingdon's Disease. In September 1970 a similar concert was held on the West coast, at the Hollywood Bowl. Evidently the records were not detailed replicas of the concerts. It appears that the performances have been intermingled without regard for the concert sequences. This is actually a commendation, for it maintains the suggestion of a live atmosphere without all the delays and splinters of applause that wreck the average live recording. Fortunately there has been no attempt to metamorphose Guthrie into a mythical American messiah. If anything the sleeve notes by Millard Lampell swing the other way "An ornery bastard. Contrary. Irresponsible." Therein is the reason for people from Pete Seeger to Country Joe wanting to sing his songs. Woody's son Arlo, Country Joe and Bob Dylan are all backed by some heavy equipment. The songs Dylan sings – 'I Ain't Got No Home', 'Dear Mrs Roosevelt' and 'The Grand Coulee Dam' – he takes so to heart that they could be his own, flaming with the brash vocal flamboyance of his later albums and accompanied by Ry Cooder (bottleneck guitar and mandolin), Band guitarist Robbie Robertson and Chris Ethridge (bass). The only song in the set not written by Woody was nevertheless one of his favourites, Goebel Reeves' 'Hobo's Lullaby', sung here by Joan Baez, while Robert Ryan, Peter Fonda and Will Gear recite some of Guthrie's writings which are earthy and direct like his songs. ***Andrew Means***

These two albums are no Library Of Congress museum pieces – they live

WHERE EAGLES DARE

Any slogging session musician unhappy with the prospect of bleak years of backing big names and lesser talents, should take heart from this story

The Eagles (l-r) Bernie Leadon, Don Henley, Randy Meisner and Glenn Frey

MM, 17 June 1972, page 32

Los Angeles – any slogging session musician unhappy with the prospect of bleak years of backing big names on records, concerts, or even accompanying non-stars and lesser talents, should take heart from this story.

It's about the sudden breakthrough of four players who had run the gamut of gigging around until they believed their future lay in getting together a regular back-up band – then when they finally did that, their own sound became a hit.

The group is The Eagles. They have been together under that name for just seven months, but have belonged to the West Coast country-rock clique for several years. Currently they are breaking through with a USA chart single, a potential smash album, and are on the present Jethro Tull tour of America, reaching huge audiences.

In Hollywood, your taxi driver is quite likely to be a musician (the one who drove me to meet The Eagles said he'd just written some songs for Buck Owens and that his wife knew Neil Young. He seemed honest). This environment of Rock Utopia breeds chain links of musicians who seem to go round in circles as well as clans. The Eagles could probably be tagged as the ones who got away from the circuit, and "made it."

First, the line-up: Glen Frey (lead guitar), who has worked a lot with Bo Diddley and Linda Ronstadt; Bernie Leadon (rhythm guitar, banjo), ex-Flying Burrito Brothers; Randy Meisner (bass), formerly with Poco; and Don Henley (drums), who regularly backed Linda Ronstadt.

"The best thing about this band is that eveyone can sing lead, everyone writes, so you get off both ways!" Bernie Leadon

They got together originally as a back-up for Linda, at the suggestion of Jackson Browne, a friend of Glenn Frey. But after one or two sessions together, they decided their sound was too good to just accompany and, now-or-never, they ought to try to crack the barrier alone.

By February The Eagles had been born and flown to London to record under the supervision of Glyn Johns. There was a power strike at the time, and Leadon recalls with a smile the independent generator that was hurriedly imported into London's Olympic Studios so that they wouldn't waste too much money by being here and out of work. They are unanimous in their unstinting praise of Glyn Johns: "I've never worked with anyone in Los Angeles who has the sort of mind as Glyn," said Bernie. "We'd all wanted to record in London, ever since we heard those early Beatles and Stones records – the mystique of British rock! The sound seems just great. It's such a different atmosphere and we love it."

"We just fancied breaking the pattern and recording in London," said Don, "But you look at the liner notes of most of the albums, and most stuff ends up being recorded here. LA is the melting pot for all of today's music and I can't see things changing."

Bernie said: "There are so many musicians around out here, it's almost ludicrous. That's one of the reasons we're lucky to have found each other, really. There are about 50 little cliques in this town, and we just happen to be part of the same musical family."

"Sometimes," interrupted Glenn, "I forget there are people in the world who don't play an instrument. Living in this place is like living in a recording studio – everyone, it seems is signed to a record company, or planning to get signed, or they own a record company."

"Whoever you are," said Don, "if you're a decent musician, you'll get a record contract in Los Angeles. The competition to sign up musicians is terrific among record companies."

That might sound like self-deprecation, but The Eagles have paid their dues. Before going on the road with Jethro Tull and later with Procol Harum, they have rehearsed their act with some gruelling sets – four nights a week for a month in a small bar in Aspen, Colorado. "Three hundred and fifty people a night, elbow to elbow – we loved it," says Glenn, "because we had an audience and we could see their reaction to our music. It was a marvellous run-in."

Musically, The Eagles may best be described as clean, fresh, country-rock, but it's the simplicity of their sound and strength of their vocals that lifts them into something special.

"The best thing about this band," remarked Bernie, "is that everyone can sing lead, everyone writes, nobody lays down the law, and everyone gets a chance to be a back-up singer. So it's much more satisfying than being a solo artist and far better than being a back-up band. So you get off both ways!"

The simple name Eagles was coined by Bernie, who had read books on Indian mythology. "Certain spiritual powers were attributed to eagles," he said. "It's high soaring, flying closer to the sun than any other bird, and it's spiritually the richest of them all."

"Eagles also sounds athletic, or like a street game, and anyway it's very American in a funny way," chipped in Glenn.

They seem to have the credentials and vitality needed to inject some new blood into the transatlantic rock scene.

Ray Coleman

THE EAGLES
The Eagles
Asylum

NME, 15 July, 1972, page 11

By word-of-mouth reputation alone, this debut album by The Eagles – born out of Poco and the Burritos – has suddenly become one of the hottest import goodies, and thereby prompted EMI to push it out in double-quick time.

Even just after one hearing, one can see why. In many ways, The Eagles are akin to America in that they somehow manage to incorporate every fashionable soft-rock device into their style, yet come up with some semblance of originality, based on their songwriting ability.

They're a fine band, who present their songs in a most appealing manner, decorating them with diverse natural harmonies and some equally effective instrumental backing. 'Take It Easy', co-written by Jackson Browne and Glenn Frey, has already been a Stateside hit and seems set to repeat its success here in England. Indeed, this one track sets the style for the entire two sides.

Apart from enjoying the sustained quality of the group, one can take time out to play "Spot The Influences". As a starter, Glenn Frey shows vocal allegiance to stablemate S Stills Esq. ***Roy Carr***

This debut album by The Eagles has suddenly become one of the hottest import goodies in the country

NEIL YOUNG
Journey Through The past
Reprise

MM, 2 December 1972, page 24

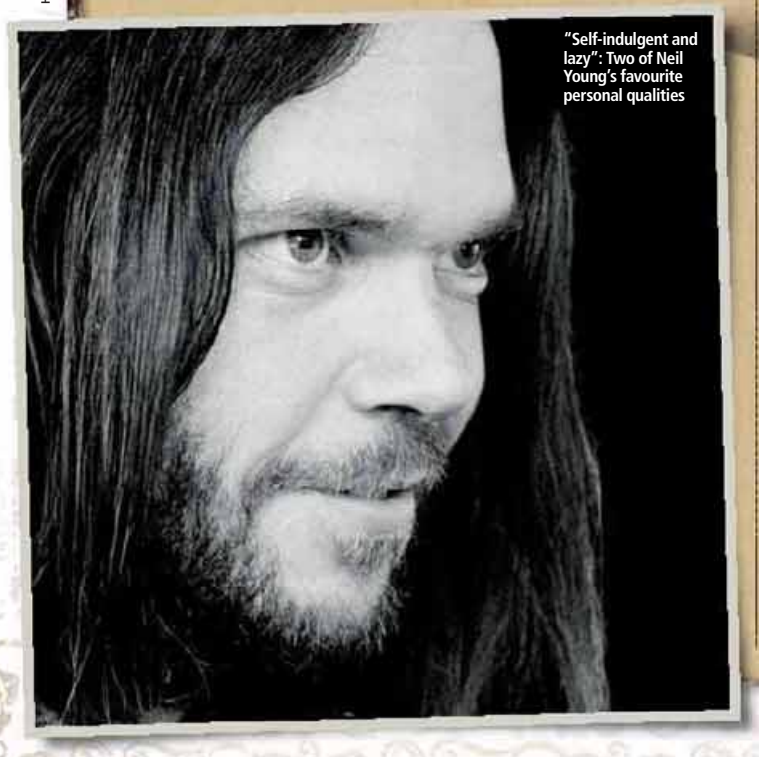
Let the buyer beware: this is not The New Neil Young Album in any meaningful sense. It's a ragbag collection of old Buffalo Springfield and CSN&Y 'live' cuts and tapes from the 'Harvest' session, seemingly salvaged from the cutting-room floor, all stitched back together with snatches of conversation, a bit of community singing, a few sound effects, and a speech, courtesy of President Nixon. There's only one new song.

The justification for all this is that it forms the soundtrack of Young's autobiographical film of the same name.

As a souvenir of the film, maybe the album stands up… I can't say, because I haven't seen it. But taken on its own merits, this album is messy and frustrating.

It doesn't tell us much we don't already know about Young. Unless, that is, you're fascinated to learn that he occasionally uses the odd expletive when things don't go too well in the studio. You could argue that this album is as mysterious and inexplicit as the songs of the man himself. If so, you may dig it. Personally, I think it smacks of self-indulgence and laziness. Young has never been the most prolific writer but surely a few new songs would not have been too much to expect? ***Alan Lewis***

HENRY DILTZ-CORBIS



"Self-indulgent and lazy": Two of Neil Young's favourite personal qualities

Joni Mitchell: Uncompromisingly honest and can get away with bad hats

JONI MITCHELL
For The Roses
Asylum

MM, 9 December 1972, page 31

More songs of transient euphoria and stabbing loss, played out against an ambiguous background of relentless fatalism and constant hope, mingled in approximately equal proportions, from the poorest little rich girl in Laurel Canyon.

The difference between Joni and most of her male balladeer companions, and the reason I respect her and not them, is that she writes her diary with an uncompromising honesty; alone among them, she knows herself, and describes her psychodramas with a cool, clear brain. Not for her is self-pity and her task is made easier by an almost total command of poetic device. Her images and metaphors are the result of thought, never the first incomplete ideas of a lazy writer who grasps the first phrase which comes to hand. Add to this a considerable and ever-developing musicianship, and a voice flexible enough to avoid the blandness this genre so often attracts, and you have a talent which, for once, justifies the acclaim it receives.

'For The Roses' is mostly about loss: in many of these songs, she caresses her precious yesterdays like the cover of an old, well-thumbed leather-bound book. 'See You Sometime' and 'Lesson In Survival' are such, but ;Woman Of Heart And Mind' is the best because she stands outside herself, painting a portrait as dispassionately as one can in such circumstances of a quixotic, demanding man – both a put-down and a come-on, it winds up as catharsis. She's at her best, like most modern poets, when she's least explicit: 'Electricity' uses a marvellous metaphor to illuminate the breakdown of a relationship, while 'Lesson In Survival' contains the only jarring moment when she sings "*Oh baby, I can't seem to make it with you socially*"; she didn't need to say that, because she's already made the point in more subtly powerful ways. In 'Blonde In The Bleachers' she speaks from bitter experience of another girl who may be herself, and even 'You Turn Me On, I'm A Radio', which sounds like a shout of joy, is really an uncertain plea.

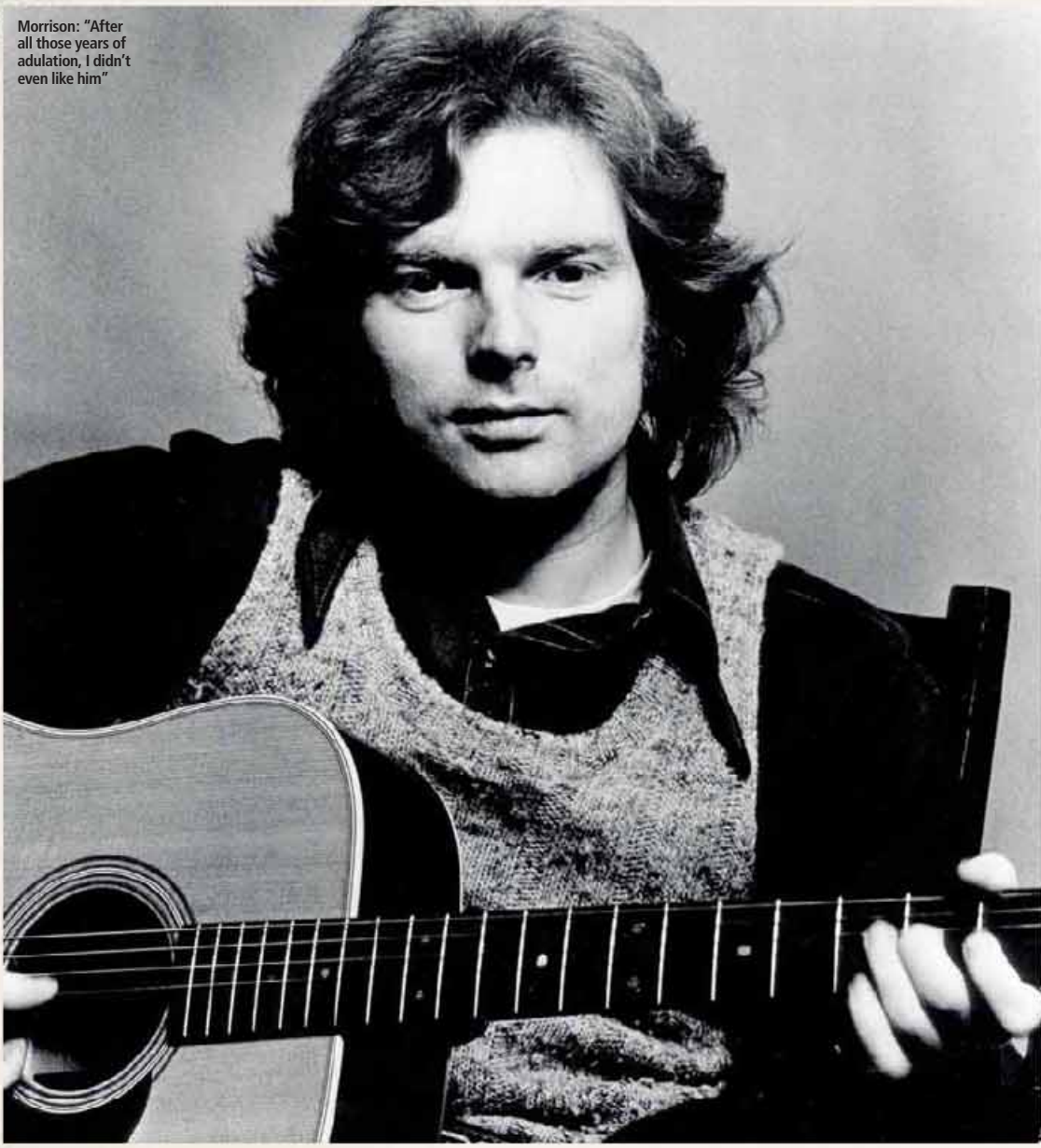
Her expanding talents as a musician are illustrated on the two most ambitious pieces. 'Cold Blue Steel And Sweet Fire' is a smack-song, and has her most finely poised writing: "*A wristwatch, a ring, a downstairs screamer/Edgy – black cracks of the sky/Pin-cush-dreamer*!" 'Judgement Of The Moon And Stars' is addressed to Beethoven, writing symphonies in his deafness. It demonstrates how she's now thinking of songs in terms of unbroken development, rather than as simple repetitions of a specific format, and I'm sure this is where her future lies.

Lastly, I should mention her voice. There will always be that mildly uncomfortable break between the contralto and soprano registers, but sometimes she can enunciate a word or phrase in a way that comes straight from heaven. The way she sings "*movie queen*", in 'Let The Wind Carry Me' is the perfect mating of a rigorous intelligence and an earthy sensuality. The product of these two qualities is a third grace, which suffuses the album. ***Richard Williams***

VAN MORRISON

The solo sensation opens up (almost) at his California home

NME, 19 August 1972, page 16



Morrison: "After all those years of adulation, I didn't even like him"

Van Morrison has been through an awful lot for a man of his age. Remember, he was only 20 in '65, the year his previous band Them made it.

Leaving Them in 1967 to pursue a solo career, Van split to New York to work with Bert Berns (who wrote and produced 'Here Comes The Night'), and Berns' Bang Records, but remained disenchanted with the business side of music.

In his first solo hit, 'Brown Eyed Girl', from the summer of '67, Van sang, "*it's so hard to find my way now that I'm all on my own.*" And although it's meant to reflect a broken love affair, I can't help but think he was subconsciously voicing the difficulty of going it alone.

Bang released his first solo album, 'Blowin' Your Mind', from a bunch of demo tapes that Morrison had cut for them. He was upset they were released without his approval, but to the layman, there's some good rhythm and blues in the set.

Van then shifted to the Warner Bros stable and issued 'Astral Weeks' in 1968. "Underground" radio had just begun in the States, and the album proved a favourite in FM circles. Musically, it was a far cry from the rowdy rock and sweaty blues he had first become known for. 'Astral Weeks' introduced an acoustic-oriented group of musicians with strong jazz overtones. The songs were still full of frustration and inner turmoil.

It was 'Moondance', his third solo venture, which awarded him wide acclaim and popularity. The band was electric and, for the first time, featured a horn section. In a nutshell, they were shit-hot. The rough edges were smoothed out of his voice and he sang more instead of shouting. The music ran the gamut of everything that ever influenced the man…jazz, blues, gospel, rock, a dash of this and a dab of that. A lot of critics called it "the album of the year". But 'Moondance' was so good, they were sure as hell not sticking their necks out.

Since then, all of Morrison's Warner albums, 'His Band And The Street Choir', 'Tupelo Honey' and 'St Dominic's Preview', his latest release, have followed the same basic musical formula as 'Moondance'. This has caused my interest to wane, while the post-'Astral Weeks' Van Morrison freaks roll around in ecstasy over the more hippie-dippee stuff they can "relate" to.

Mind you, shades of the old Van Morrison do manage to emerge through songs like 'Domino', 'Wild Night' and 'Listen To The Lion'. But for the most part, the bomb that threatened to explode in his records has become a harmless Virgo-Gypsy whose (sound) quality is high, but content and depth are low.

I, personally, would like to hear more of the restless lion in Van Morrison and a lot less of the delicate romanticisms and unimaginative contrivances.

During my recent return to California, I made a special trip to San Francisco to interview Morrison. Actually, he lives in San Rafael, which is approximately ten miles north of the Golden Gate Bridge. On the way to his house, you pass by the office of Caledonian Productions (Van's company), which is located in a neighbourhood shopping centre half a mile from where he lives. Van manages himself, as well as booking his own gigs. Driving to his house, the small dirt roads present hair-pin turns without ample warning.

Past the front gate, there's a long up-hill walk along the driveway, until the perched mountain home becomes visible, and impressive. The house is completely secluded and surrounded on all sides by redwoods. He's lived there for the past year with his wife (Janet Planet) and their two kids.

Van was in the living room. His light brown hair is thinning and, though he had brushed it back, it was falling from the

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVE–REDFERNS/BARRY SCHULTZ-RETNA

middle to below his ears on each side.

He wore sunglasses which allowed his eyes to wander freely, and was curled up on a couch in a very stand-off-ish manner which prevailed throughout the interview.

His music may glow, but his ideas remain safely tucked away behind an invisible wall of self-defence. After all this time of listening to his records and memorising every word, after all those long years of adulation – I didn't even like the guy.

NME: What kind of records did you listen to early on?

Morrison: New Orleans jazz, blues, country and western and folk – well it's called folk, y'know, the stuff like Leadbelly and Sonny Terry and Brownie McGee, Hank Williams…that kind of stuff. Then I picked up on Muddy Waters and Sonny Boy Williamson.

I think Leadbelly really inspired me to start playin' guitar and singin'. It came from that, and early rock'n'roll. I was about 12 or 13 when I sang and played guitar.

Then I took up sax after that and I split it up half and half between sax and singin'. In the bands I was in, other people were singin' too.

When did you begin to write songs?

I started writing because that's not what was happenin'. I mainly wrote boy/girl songs at first and some blues things. I never really got a chance to write until after Them. I'd written before that – did a couple of numbers in various bands before that – but people weren't really into original material when I started. They were into copies of American R&B.

Were you ever in a showband?

Yeah. At that time we did almost everything, like a Vegas type of thing. We also did R&B, which none of the other showbands or groups were doing. People didn't really know what rhythm and blues was until much later when groups like The Beatles did 'Twist And Shout' and the Stones came out doing Muddy Waters and Jimmy Reed numbers. Then all of a sudden everybody started to cop on.

But we were playin' long before that and everyone was saying, "What is it? We can't relate to that kind of music." I guess when people like the Stones and Yardbirds came along and were commercial with it, all of a sudden they got into it.

When I was 14 and 15, I used to play people Bo Diddley and Chuck Berry records and they just didn't know what it was. They'd say, "What is it? It doesn't sound like rock'n'roll." All of a sudden, three or four years after that, Bo Diddley was the big "in" thing.

Where were you at around the time of 'Blowin' Your Mind'? Your singing seems to reflect a lot of frustration...

I don't think that album really has anything to do with where I was at. An album is just an album. You do it when you're doin' the album and then after you do it, you're done. It may reflect where you were at in one given period of time, but after you've done the album, it's over. My life can't revolve around an album.

I mean, it's just an album. Any album is roughly 40 minutes of music, but that doesn't mean that it continues to be something else. It's entertainment.

It seems to me like 'Astral Weeks' was an over-reaction to receiving complete artistic freedom. It's unlike anything you've recorded before or since.

It's just what it was, y'know. It's just what I wanted to do at that particular time, so I did it. There's a lot of stuff that I've never recorded that's totally far out. But I make albums primarily to sell 'em and, if I get too far out, a lot of people can't relate to it. There's a lot in between 'Gloria', 'Brown Eyed Girl' and 'Astral Weeks'. There's a lot of different things I do and I can't get them all on one album. If you just put on the tape machine and record six hours worth – who's going to put out six hours if it's not commercial?

"I make albums primarily to sell 'em, and if I get too far out, a lot of people can't relate to it"

There's really nothin' to talk about when you discuss that, because it's the difference between art and showbusiness.

Do you sacrifice your art for showbusiness, or is an album like 'Moondance' another side to your musical spectrum?

That was just another side. I didn't sacrifice, but I don't think I'm going to sacrifice any more. I feel like I've been sacrificing all along to a certain extent. Some of the songs I put out as singles were much better live. Maybe they were like five minutes live, right? Well, on a single it'd be something like three minutes. So that's a compromise.

It would have been better to put out the five minute version. It's just all this red tape that the record companies give you about three minute singles.

Are you becoming more comfortable with performing live?

My situation is: I don't dig performing in big halls where you can't feel the people. I think performing is a waste of time for me unless I can feel the people. And I've been to other people's concerts in enormous halls and you just can't feel it. It's just hype. It's like the kids are there to see a name or some kind of image that's been built up. They just see it and they don't feel it, unless they're right up front. So I like to perform in small places where I can feel like I'm enjoyin' it – rather than clockin' in and out of work.

Any particular group of musicians you've enjoyed working with?

Yeah. The one with Colin Tilton and Jack Schroer on horns, Dahaud Shaar on drums, Jeff Labes on piano, John Klingberg on bass and John Platania on guitar. It was a really good combination.

In the early days, your voice sounded intense and frustrated and now it's more relaxed. Is that a personal reflection?

I think it must be. Yeah, it's gotta be.

What type of music do you listen to at home?

I listen to jazz, like Mose Allison and Gil Evans. I dig the Band's albums. I don't like heavy rock'n'roll though. It doesn't turn me on. I don't like screaming guitars and stuff like that. I'd rather listen to Carl Perkins or Chuck Berry for rock'n'roll.

Do you ever plan to play England again?

At this stage in the game, I don't really know. But I'm not planning on touring…period.

I plan on playing some gigs in the States, but not touring. When I tour, it's just a distraction from writing.

And I want to write mainly, but I can't do that on the road. It takes a lot of work to put it together.

For me, it takes a lot of rehearsals and planning. It might take up to six months of my time just to do one tour.

Danny Holloway

VAN MORRISON
Saint Dominic's Preview
Warner Bros

NME, 19 August 1972, page 12

Like I've said elsewhere in these pages, Van's albums have followed the same basic musical formula since 'Moondance'. A song like 'Jackie Wilson Says (I'm In Heaven When You Smile)', for example, could easily be slotted into either of his last two albums. The song is also just scratching the surface, creatively, of all that he has to offer. OK, so it's alright, but it's not brilliant or outstanding, which he *is* capable of being. 'Gypsy' doesn't move me much at all. Whereas I can half-way get behind the intended simplicity of 'Jackie Wilson', this song is not up to his standard either. The next song, 'I Will Be There', is a great jazz/blooze number that sounds like the kind of thing you might hear from a band at a bar at three in the morning. Van also belts some of the best vocal work in quite some time. He really should think more about singing, as he does in this tune. All in all, I think Van has continued his excellent production technique as on the last three albums. But I feel he's in a transitional state, and I can't wait for him to get there. Maybe then we'll see some more of the real Van Morrison. ***Danny Holloway***

The song is just scratching the surface, creatively, of all that Van has to offer

A rare live outing for folk's Mr Amenable

So tell us CARLY who's So Vain?

It has taken three albums, but Carly Simon has finally made it, and is now dominating the charts

Carly Simon: "I'm just not that sly"

BOB GRUEN–STARFILE/PHOTOFEST

MM, 27 January 1973, page 3

Carly Simon keeps a sun-kissed apartment in Manhattan, but her heart lies in Martha's Vineyard, the resort island off Cape Cod, Massachusetts.

She and her husband, James Taylor, are looking forward to the completion of their house up there by the end of the summer.

"The best place of the house," says Carly Simon with a smile as pleased and bright as on the back of her album 'No Secrets', "is we have a 45 foot tower with four storeys and just a circular stairway going up to the top. On the top you're so close to the stars."

Of course, it's stars of quite another kind that make 'You're So Vain' so intriguing to fans. Carly just loves all the rumours that have popped up and asks for more. I tell her Cat Stevens and Kris Kristofferson are in the running, but that I love the song because it describes so many people I've run across.

Carly sinks back into her long, comfortable couch and laughs.

"I know. It certainly is not about Mick Jagger. I would never ever have done that. I mean, that really takes a lot of slyness and I'm just not that sly.

"I really like Mick. He's a friend of mine and in no way would I ever do anything like that to a person that I really cared for.

"But anyway, you're right. It is about a lot of people. The actual examples that I've used in the song are from my imagination, but the stimulus is directly from a couple of different sources. I mean it's not just one particular person."

Carly's apartment is that rare kind where there are plenty of soft couches to flop down on and even in an almost rustic kitchen-dining area a big round table.

The only touch of disorder is her opened suitcase on the living room floor next to a high, intricately constructed, but still unfinished table that James built the previous evening.

She hates to unpack and might as well not bother because she's taking off with James for his Japanese tour and one Hawaiian concert in a few days. She herself has no plans to perform except for a TV special to be taped in the spring.

"I do want to do some things with James," she says. "I'll probably work myself into his show in Japan in devious little ways. I don't know how but I mean he invited me to. It's not that I'm usurping his time. In a way, I'd prefer not to perform. I like to avoid feeling uncomfortable.

"When I perform I feel that much more uncomfortable than normally but I probably will work into his show a little bit. I have trouble performing now because the album is very produced and I would feel naked without everybody who played on it being there. It's a very full sound and I'd like to duplicate it."

To anyone who's seen Carly work, it must seem incredible that she doesn't like to perform. She comes across as one of the most natural, most loving and most relaxed performers I've ever seen. A woman who enjoys herself and wants the audience to do the same.

> "'I refuse to be propelled in the typical way singers are in this business – like you've got to follow up your hit quick"

Still, she says: "I don't know a performer, with the exception of maybe John McLaughlin, who's not terrified to go onstage, but everybody deals with it in a different way."

Ask Carly if she's begun working on her next album yet and she answers with a smile in a Maria Ouspenskaya Transylvanian Gypsy accent: "My dear, I just completed this vun."

Then she gets serious and explains: "I refuse to be propelled in the typical way that singers are in this business, like if you've got a hit you've got to follow it up quick with a follow-up single.

"Of course, it's the way it goes. Just grind them out. I can't do it. I just know I can't.

"Perhaps this is my peak and from now on it will be downhill, but if that's the way it's got to be – I've got to keep my health and my mental health and my homelife and the things that are more important to me than having hit records."

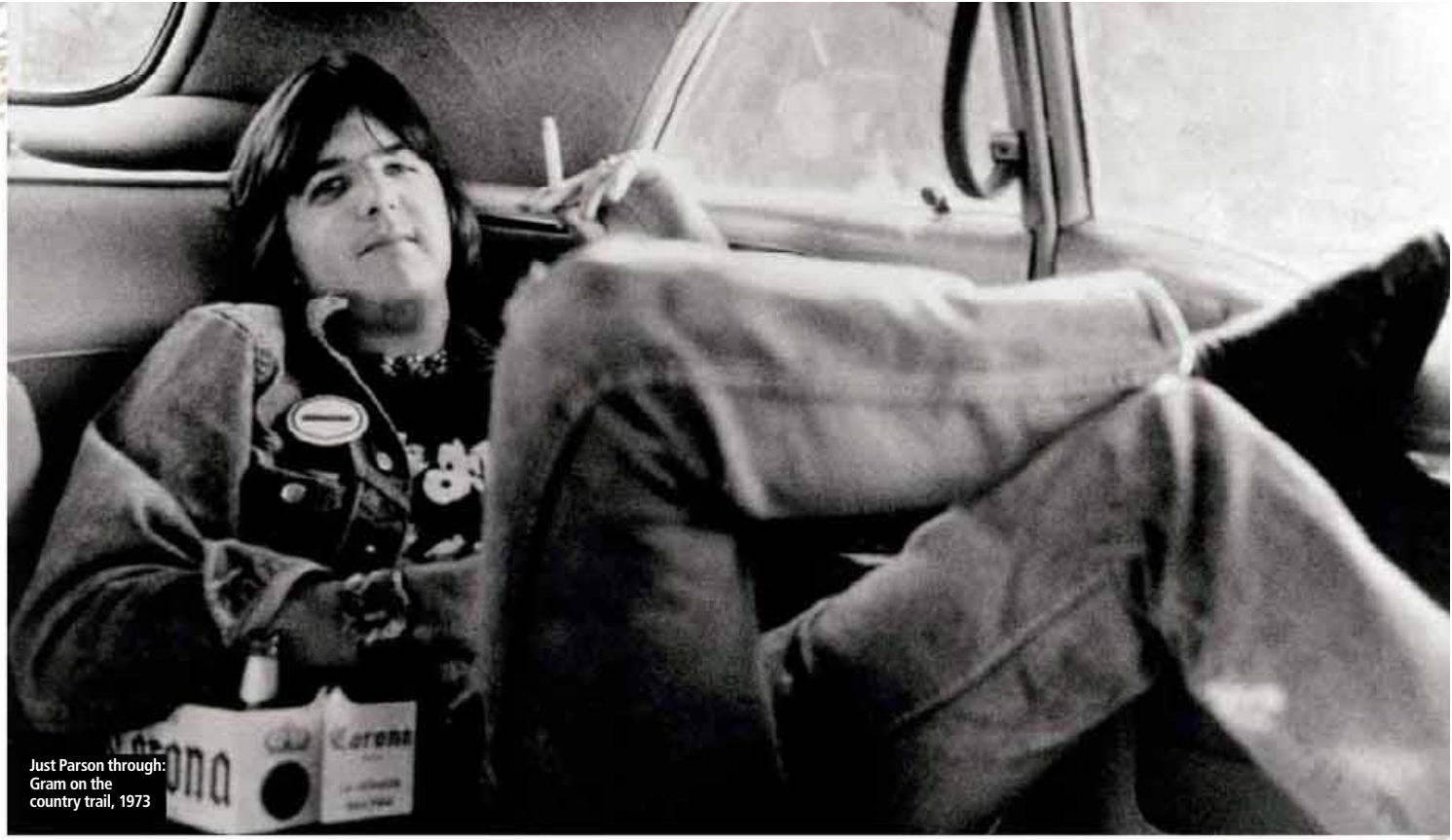
Loraine Alterman

SINGLE

MM, 2 December 1972, p14

CARLY SIMON
You're So Vain
Elektra

An unusual accompaniment lends a menacing mood to a song that reminds me in part of 'Woodstock'. Carly sings beautifully and it's a most tasteful production, but too long for a single.
Chris Welch



Just Parson through: Gram on the country trail, 1973

PARSONS KNOWS...

MM, 7 April 1973, page 33

The confederate flag was flying on the stage upstairs at Max's during Gram Parsons' gig to announce that country music was in town.

The man, who five years ago pulled The Byrds into country-rock and then formed The Flying Burrito Brothers, was in the sixth week of an eight-week cross-country tour, his first time on the road in two years.

His first solo album, 'GP', has recently been released by Warner Bros and it, like his live act, features the soaring voice of one Emmylou Harris, who Gram has been working with ever since his former Byrd and Burrito colleague, Chris Hillman, introduced them a year ago.

"Chris knew I was looking for somebody who sang higher than he does," Gram says.

"I heard her in Washington DC, where she'd been paying dues singing in bars. She was doing a lot of lead singing and didn't really have anybody good to back her up, somebody she could work with. I was looking for the same thing."

'GP' was made in two weeks, amazing considering the time some people spend on albums, but Gram points out: "I was never able to get things done fast working with groups. You always get five different opinions and everybody is the arranger."

Growing up in Georgia is what put Gram's roots solidly in country music and he thinks that young people all over the country are now opening their ears to this favourite kind of sound. "I guess they've just been hearing more of it so that it doesn't sound so foreign to their ears anymore," he says.

"It doesn't sound like the rednecks or the older generation or anything like that. Of course, the younger kids like a lot of plastic with their country music too. But we get a good younger audience, very finely tuned and together. They like the slow ballads as much as they do the dance stuff and they seem to be very sincere in the fact that they dig country music."

He was pleased to note a change in England too last summer. Country music was growing. "About three years ago, there were definitely not many people into it. People liked it in a sort of naïve way, like I did when I was a kid.

"I didn't know it was called country music or that black music was called blues. All I knew was that one sounded this way and one sounded like the other. Over there now it seems they have gotten into country music a little bit more and they are even starting to produce their own.

"There are the beginnings of it over there in guys like Alvin Lee. He's a very fine guitar player. The steel players that I've heard in England don't offer me very much but I've heard singers from London and Newcastle whom I didn't realise were English. I was in an Italian restaurant near Victoria station. There was this cat just singing by himself. He sounded just like Waylon Jennings and I was sure he was from Texas.

"After he was through the set I said, 'Hey man, let me buy you a drink'.
I asked where he was from and he said, in a British accent, 'the south of London'."

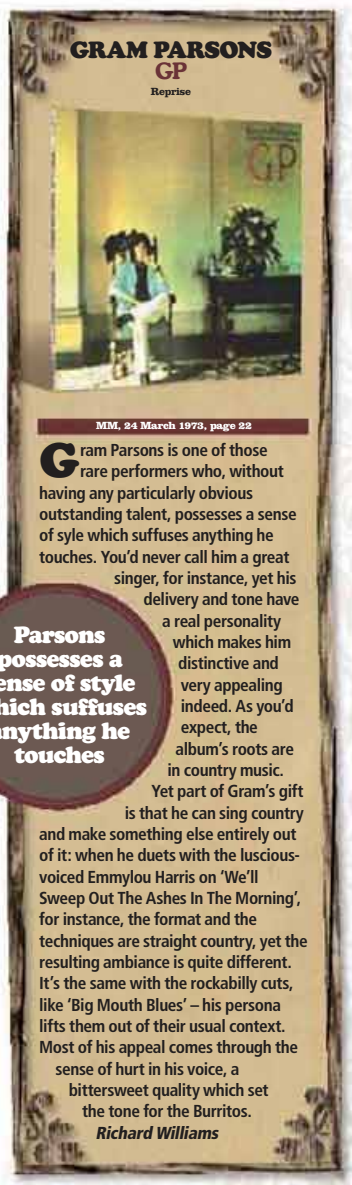
Despite his devotion to country music, Gram wishes some more new things were happening in rock in general. "Maybe it's all this litter rock," he notes. "Some people call it glitter rock. I call it litter rock. Everybody is just out to make a buck and if they see a chance to jump on the bandwagon they do. As soon as a fad starts, dyeing their hair and wearing make-up, and the paying public gets a hold of it, and it gets off the ground, it's already starting to die.

"All they're doing is just dyeing their hair and putting on make-up for six months only trying to make bucks. I mean can you actually imagine anybody trying to do that and continuing to do it for say ten years? We're into the great age of nothing rock."

Perhaps Gram Parsons can save the world with his brand of country rock. He laughs and says: "We're going to try. We're going to pull it all out of the apocalypse.

"Good country music teaches a lot of simple lessons." ***Loraine Alterman***

"Everybody is just out to make a buck and if they see a chance to jump on the bandwagon, they do"



MM, 24 March 1973, page 22

Gram Parsons is one of those rare performers who, without having any particularly obvious outstanding talent, possesses a sense of syle which suffuses anything he touches. You'd never call him a great singer, for instance, yet his delivery and tone have a real personality which makes him distinctive and very appealing indeed. As you'd expect, the album's roots are in country music.

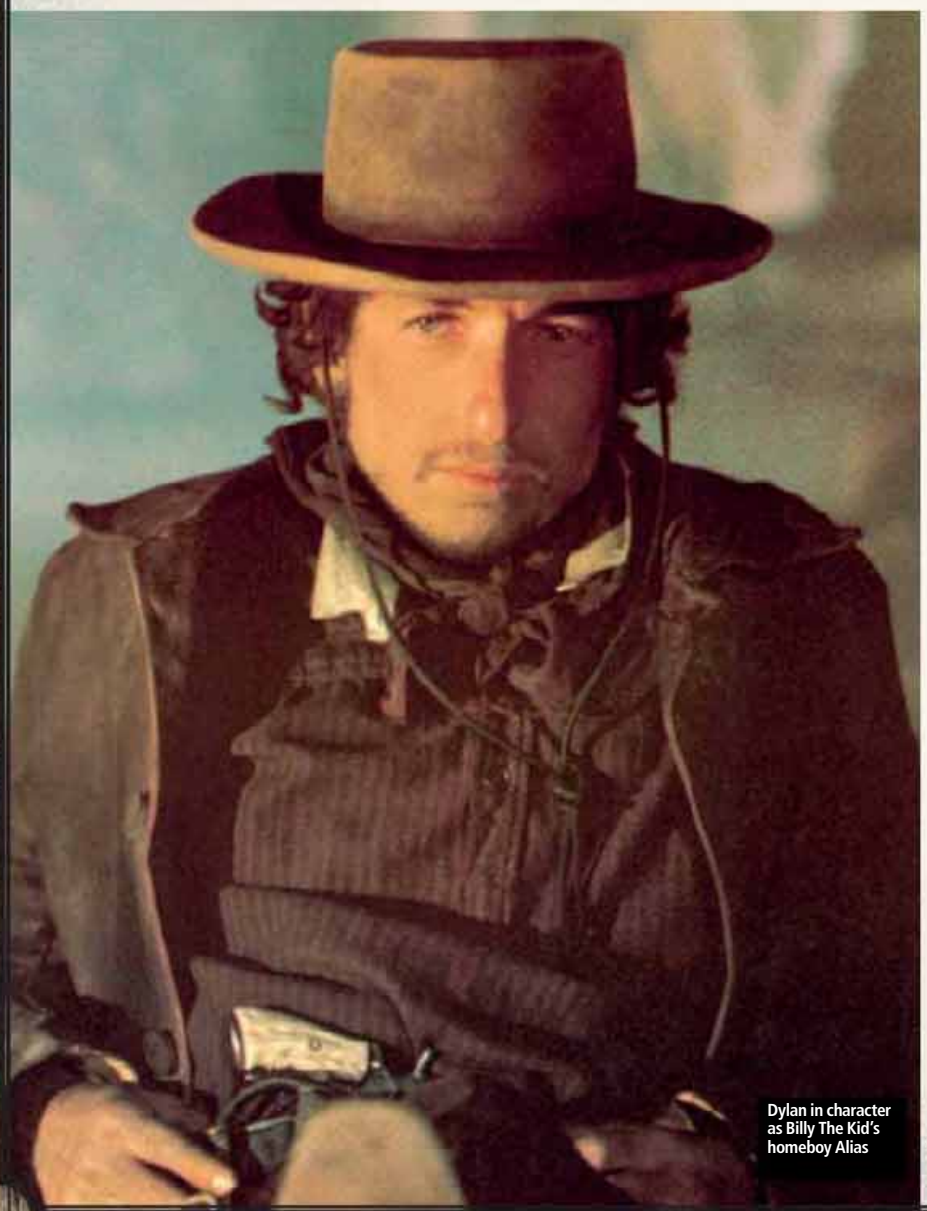
Parsons possesses a sense of style which suffuses anything he touches

Yet part of Gram's gift is that he can sing country and make something else entirely out of it: when he duets with the luscious-voiced Emmylou Harris on 'We'll Sweep Out The Ashes In The Morning', for instance, the format and the techniques are straight country, yet the resulting ambiance is quite different. It's the same with the rockabilly cuts, like 'Big Mouth Blues' – his persona lifts them out of their usual context. Most of his appeal comes through the sense of hurt in his voice, a bittersweet quality which set the tone for the Burritos.

Richard Williams

THE MAN CALLED ALIAS

Wearied by the music business, Dylan tries his hand at film acting and knife-throwing



Dylan in character as Billy The Kid's homeboy Alias

PICTORIAL PRESS/REX FEATURES

MM, 3 February, 1973, page 28

The scene is Durango, a dusty mining town with the highest murder rate in Mexico. Here, Sam Peckinpah, master of super violence (Wild Bunch, Straw Dogs) is directing *Pat Garrett & Billy The Kid.* All eyes are on the man who plays Billy's sidekick. For the man is Bob Dylan, bringing to his first acting role a dedication which suggests he has found the new direction which has eluded him for so long.

It is more than two years since he made his last album, 'New Morning', and there are apparently no plans for another solo venture. He has consistently intimated to friends that he is tired of the music business, and he takes little active part in it.

He is Bob Dylan. But who is Bob Dylan? As the myth of the musician and the generational symbol rises like creeping fog he casts about for a new purpose to it all.

He sees other pre-eminent musicians, like Lennon and Jagger, involved in movies. An old mentor is Andy Warhol. Down in Mexico, a newer friend, Kris Kristofferson, is starring in a film, as Billy The Kid.

Dylan was fascinated with the idea of a movie part as much as daunted. But he went down with Kristofferson's manager Bert Block to Mexico to exorcise his doubts. He was shown around the set. He was particularly captivated by the wardrobe of Western clothes, trying on the hats and costumes like a kid dressing for a fancy dress party.

He looked around for a while and then quietly picked up a guitar and sang a song he'd written about Billy The Kid to Kris and Coburn, and Peckinpah offered him a part there and then.

He plays, with the most fitting of poetic justices, the part of Alias. In the public life of the musician he is the man of uncertain identity. In the movies he is the man with no name.

Maggie Netter, an MGM publicist, tells me as we drive out on Saturday morning for the location site, El Sauz, that Dylan talks to no one, unless he wishes to.

"It's not just that he's picking on you, but, he's..." she searches for the right adjective, "he's just *rude*." Ah! The *mucho mysterioso* quality.

The car pulls into a large open space in front of the preserves of a big, crumbling stone building constructed as a cavalry fort some hundred years ago.

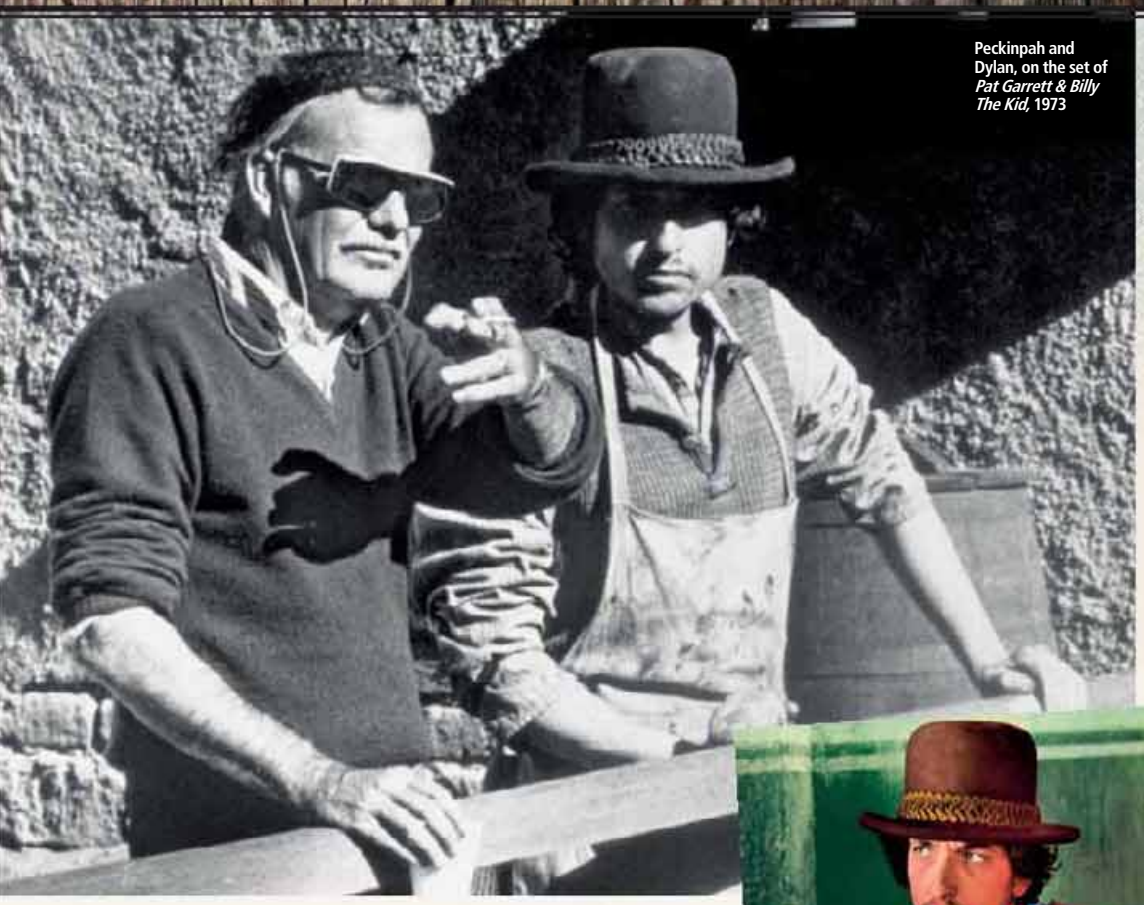
In one of the fort buildings, Peckinpah was shooting and rehearsing his actors. He was out of sight, but the authority in the voice left no doubt as to its identity.

"Dylan is great," Rudy Wurlitzer, the writer of the screenplay, told me as filming went on. "He's come down here to learn, he's turning in stuff, and it's been really impressive. I don't know what he really wants to do but I hope he would do his own film because he's an artist."

"The really interesting thing," he continued thoughtfully, "is what's going on between Dylan and Peckinpah. Sam is really Western, like an outlaw, looking to the wide open spaces. Dylan, you could say, was more Eastern. He brings a different point of view, especially to a Western. The part is small, but it's important in a funny sort of way. Do the two of them have any common ground? *That's* the big question."

On the nightly plane back to Mexico City, I sat across the aisle from Kris Kristofferson and we cradled a bottle of Jameson between us. And there, in the seat right beside him, was a little guy from Minnesota named Bob Dylan.

He was a whole era of youth coiled into one man, and now slowly winding down into the years past 30, and the consciousness of this had escaped no-one, least of all him, with his eyes set straight and stonily to the front lest he be forced to pick up those curious sidelong glances, just as a magnet does iron filings.



Peckinpah and Dylan, on the set of *Pat Garrett & Billy The Kid,* 1973

As the plane was taking off, and I began to speak to Kristofferson, he got up jumpily from his seat and went to sit at the back.

We had begun to climb as he reluctantly dumped himself down again behind Kristofferson. He pulled his hat down right over his face, which was odd, because his body was rigidly upright in his seat, cocked and attentive.

"Listen," said Kristofferson as we touched down, "this guy can do anything. In the script, he has to throw a knife. It's real difficult. After 10 minutes or so, he could do it perfect."

I looked back at the crown of the straw hat in uncompromising full-frontal. I said I was too scared to talk to the man right now.

"*Sheeeit,* man!," Kristofferson roared, "*You're* scared? *I'm* scared, and I'm making a pitcher with him!"

I began to feel more than ever like the lead in 'Ballad Of A Thin Man'.

They recorded until seven the following morning, Dylan's 'Billy The Kid' and some other stuff he'd written in Durango. On Monday morning, Bobby got on the plane and sat towards the back with a few empty seats around him. Kris and Rita Coolidge were right down the other end.

About three-quarters of an hour out from Mexico City, he saw a newspaper guy get out of his seat, walk to Kristofferson and crouch next to him talking.

Kristofferson was saying "…I was just disgusted with him. He'd start a song and just keep changing it around. He had horn players, trumpets, and they didn't know a damn thing what they had to do because he couldn't make up his mind. I left about three. No, we haven't spoken today."

Dylan saw all this, he saw the guy go back to his seat. That was when he sidled cautiously down the aisle and nudged me abruptly in the shoulder.

"You with the *Melody Maker*?" he demanded. Surprised nod. "

Is Max Jones still working there?" Sure he was. Dylan gave Max Jones his first ever UK interview, for *Melody Maker,* ten years before.

Dylan talks in this light, soft voice with a husk to it. He is also terribly shy, which he largely masks by an air of alienation he throws around himself.

Disembarking from the plane, I found him in the bar, engrossed with a camera, at almost eight in the morning.

"It's not happening in London," I said, apropos a remark made on the plane,

"New York's the place. That's what John Lennon says," he says, focusing the lens.

"I saw *Eat The Document* there at the Whitney," I offer. He looks directly at me.

"Do you know Howard *(Alk, who co-edited the film with Dylan)*?"

"No. Was it originally supposed to be like *Don't Look Back* before it was re-edited?"

"No, it couldn't be. We didn't have enough good footage. There was 40 hours of it, but the camera was jumping around all the time. That was the only stuff we could salvage."

"Would you go back and play in England ever?"

Silence. He turned three-quarters and carefully placed the cup on the counter. There was no answer. Instead, taking off at a sudden tangent, he said, "Did you see *Fly*?"

"You mean the one about the fly crawling up the wall for half an hour? No." We all laughed.

Dylan talks in a light soft voice, and is terribly shy, which he largely masks by an air of alienation he throws around himself

"Did you see *Hard On*?" he said suddenly.

"No, but I saw *Rape*, the one with the girl being chased."

He nodded.

"Warhol was making movies like that years ago. I prefer the stuff with Morrissey actually." I was trying not to sound smug.

He nodded again, then asked "Did you see *Lonesome Cowboys*?"

"No, but I saw *Heat.*" It was getting to be quite funny. Every time he asked me he looked so intense.

"*Sylvia Miles*?"

"Yeah."

Silence once more.

"Tell me, how can you stand it down here?"

"It's not too bad because I'm making a film. If I wasn't…" The sentence was chopped off because the producer had come up and told him he could get in the car.

The next day ,nerves on the set were jagged. Dylan was being put through his paces in a crucial scene.

As the cameras rolled, Dylan was sitting on a chair surrounded by half a dozen ragged Mexican kids, strumming an acoustic.

On the far right of the scene, a cowboy was leaning on his horse. Billy The Kid and his gang were around a campfire on the left. There was a lot of laughing and tomfoolery.

Then Dylan rises. He's been playing nervously with a knife, turning it round in his hand. He walks a dozen paces towards the campfire as the cowboy on the horse shouts after him, "Hey, boy, what's your name?" as if he was a piece of dirt. He stops and faces round with the knife in his hand.

"Alias," he replies shortly. His knife taps against his leg.

"Alias what?" barks the horseman.

"Alias whatever you want," comes the rejoinder. The gang laugh.

"They just call him Alias," says one. His interrogator grunts.

There's the sound of muttering – and then, in a flash-point that takes you by surprise, Dylan's arm arcs back with the knife, and a seated outlaw gargles in the back of his throat, knocked on his side with the force of the knife supposedly sticking through his neck.

"Cut," says Peckinpah. "Aaaaaaaaah!" goes all that escaping air in relief. "Print it," grins Block.

He leaves as some kind of musical Messiah, and returns, years later, as an actor playing a small part in a movie. Yet even before the film is finished, the questions mount. Will Dylan really turn away from music to concentrate more on films? Will he start making records again? Could he ever return to doing concerts? He's unwavering, however, in his refusal to relinquish any part of his private self to his public, and this seems destined to continue.

You ask who is Bob Dylan? He is Alias, Alias whatever you want. ***Michael Watts***

ROY HARPER
Lifemask
Harvest

MM, 24 February, 1973, page 25

Roy Harper scares the life out of me. He laughs, and you never quite know if the laugh is aimed at you or not. He keeps you suspended.

But he's got a sense of humour – so important that. If only more could be like Harper there'd be just a few singer-songwriters around to make you sit up and listen.

On record, or performing, he's terrifying. How can you answer the man when he's a shadow on a distant stage or an electric impulse from a speaker. He's watching, waiting, listening. 'Lifemask' is the most impressive album I've heard this year. It's not rock and roll, it's not pop and it sure isn't jazz, but it isn't acoustic either. He's too damn clever just to rig up a mic and play it live. The whole Abbey Road studio comes into life with double tracking slowed tapes, backward bits – every trick in the book.

He's the downtrodden poet trying to escape from his insanity by imposing it on me. Harper of the high screeching voice and the ragged heavy handed guitar has put, on 'Lifemask', a collage of sounds and words, that gets nearer to himself than anything on record before. 'The Lord's Prayer' is an acid trip into his mind. It splits into six moods as it winds through eight pieces, from the original poem to a height of electric blowing. A piece of brilliant poetry, its words flow with the beauty of a clean stream, and they bite hard. Harper sings with that unworldly voice and there's Jimmy Page (remember Zeppelin's tribute to Harper) playing guitar and a heavy rhythm section as well as strings. Side two is more orthodox Harper with five songs that prove how misunderstood he is. Opening with 'Highway Blues' he brings to mind early horrors of days spent standing on the kerb praying for a lift from the man in his fast, empty car. Most important is 'All Ireland', a song that suggests what's wrong with the beautiful country. It's this song that suggests Harper's importance. Having heard every Irish song from McCartney's 'Give Ireland Back To The Irish' to the Sutherland Brothers' latest dreadful effort, Harper's the one with the understanding. Forget the lyrical qualities of his numbers and the feeling in them that's hard to ignore. He won't let you, with that horrible voice splitting to a high pitched scream. One day people are going to realise the nearest we've ever come to a poet with as much perception as Bob Dylan is Harper. But Roy has persevered with his craft and taken it to limits that were never realised before. I've got a feeling you're going to "make it" Roy. And more important, you'll make it on your own terms.

Mark Plummer

On record, or performing, Roy Harper is terrifying. He's watching, waiting

BOB DYLAN
Pat Garrett & Billy The Kid
CBS

MM, 18 August 1973, page 30

Even a little Bob Dylan is worth the wait. It's been virtually three years now since Dylan's last album (not counting, that is, the greatest hits), and CBS are, apparently, claiming this to be his next official release. Well, he wrote all the music, plays on all the tracks, sings a little, but it sounds like a movie soundtrack album, which, of course, it is. Thus, most of these tracks are Dylan-esque instrumentals which probably fit perfectly into the context of the film but which, on their own, don't really have the strength to hold an album together.

There are, in fact, only four vocal numbers – and three of those are different versions of the same song. It's a potent song however, dealing with director Sam Peckinpah's – and Dylan's – obsession with Western mystique; the West as the last refuge of the individual. "*There's guns across the river about to pound you/ There's a lawman on your trail, like to surround you/ Bounty hunters a dancin' all around you/ Billy, they don't like you to be so free*" sings Dylan on 'Billy 1' and 'Billy 4'. The first version comes with characteristic Dylan harmonica intro, underpinned by Booker T. Jones' forceful bass lines and Bruce Langhorn's lovely, lilting guitar. The musical theme of the song is introduced at the beginning of the album with the six-minute-long instrumental, 'Main Title Theme (Billy)'. 'Billy 4', however, changes the melody line and pace of the song – the lyrics remain the same.

The one absolute gem on the album however, is 'Knockin' On Heaven's Door'. None of the American trade reviews on the album have even bothered to mention this track, but for me it's the highlight of the record. The number comes complete with Jim Keltner's immaculate drumming and Roger McGuinn and Terry Paul, together of course, with Dylan on guitars. Perfect Dylan and worth the price of the album. A compulsive melody line and an amazing chorus effect, coupled with Dylan's vocals at their best.

The rest of the album is confined to instrumentals. And here Dylan plays a limited role, content to remain in the background as a rhythm guitarist. Most of the instrumentals including 'Cantina Theme (Working For The Law)', 'River Theme' and 'Bunk House Theme' sound too obviously like movie themes to be entirely satisfactory on an album. They are without precise musical identities, more like beautifully performed throwaway cuts. Background music, without that vital visual link. In fact, this would make a great EP. But still, there is 'Knockin' On Heaven's Door' – classic Dylan. Every home should have a copy of that song.

Robert Partridge

DONOVAN
Cosmic Wheels
Epic

NME, 3 March 1973, page 11

God, if you thought Donovan was all about simplicity, pretty tunes and flowery lyrics this is going to come as quite a shock. The point is that Donovan, as the saying goes, has gone heavy, very heavy indeed.

And unlike his previous excursions with electricity as in the 'Sunshine Superman' era or with 'Open Road', this is really intense; almost uptight. The first side reveals a side of Donovan previously unknown. There's an uneasy tenseness about the title track for example, with a muzzy bass, a rolling, slow-riding tune and lyrics dealing with our minstrel's recent problems caused apparently by the stars not behaving themselves.

The mood continues right through, with Donovan often screaming out the lyrics and a tugging, urging string section adding to the drama.

Every artist has to change and develop, and none more so than Donovan. It was the only road open to him to and it's good to see he was brave enough to follow it through.

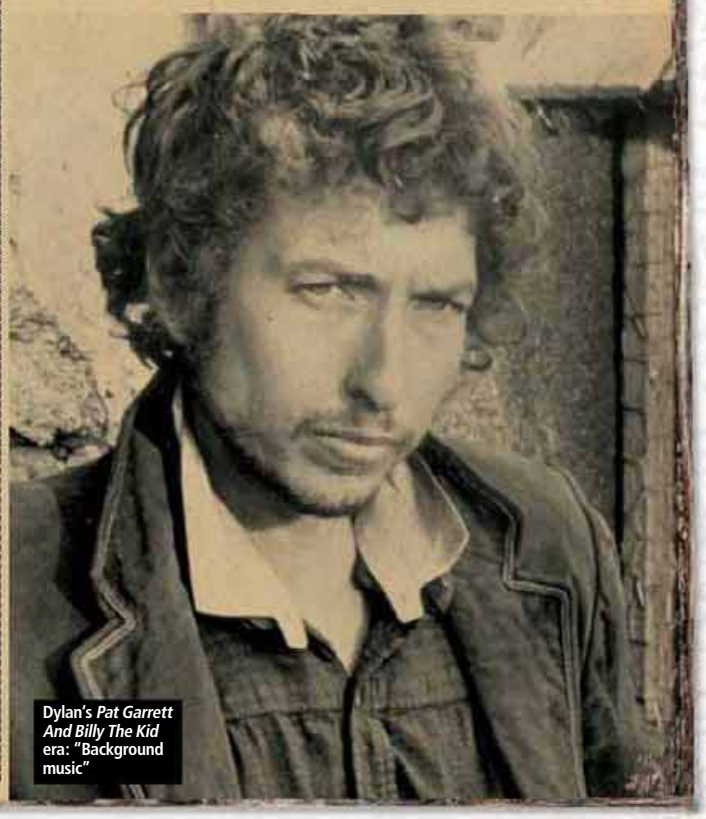
If he was to make any contribution in the '70s he had to come back with something other than the sweet, sugary little numbers of before. He has done, with verve and confidence, and it deserves to pay off.

James Johnson

JOHN MARTYN
Solid Air
Island

MM, 3 March 1973, page 24

How do you begin to describe a guitarist as sensitive and accomplished as John Martyn? Every new album expands one's appreciation of his ability. Most guitarists who fall under the "singer-songwriter" brandname, if they even recognise their instrument as anything other than a backcloth for lyrics, use the guitar to emphasise melody and speed. Martyn is outstanding in recognising the harmony pertaining to the instrument, the shades of tone and volume that can be moulded around the main melodic and rhythmic structure. The list of accompanying musicians and instruments is long and impressive, and correspondingly there is a concentration upon timbre, building up into some very extraordinary landscapes. Martyn's performances, and also his writing, allow the strong rhythms that have characterised past recordings to be superseded to some extent, or at least over-shadowed, by experimentation with tone. He has become far more confident about giving his voice free reign, and the result is greatly to his advantage. Finally, a word on behalf of the many hundreds (perhaps millions – who knows?) who must currently be waiting with bated breath for John Martyn to record his awesome experiments with a reverb unit etc: Hurry up and do it. ***Andrew Means***



Dylan's *Pat Garrett And Billy The Kid* era: "Background music"

REX FEATURES/JIM McCRARY–REDFERNS

GRAM PARSONS

The superstar who didn't quite make it, but added his personal panache to The Byrds, The Flying Burrito Brothers and an all-too-brief solo career

NME, 6 October 1973, page 25

Gram Parsons somehow never quite got to be the nationally-touted superstar he deserved to be, which is possibly as much his own fault as anyone else's.

However, the general apathy that greeted the various ventures he embarked on throughout his career seems all the more criminal in times when the country-rock schlock fell into the more successful hands of lesser talents ranging from Kris Kristofferson's tiresomely hokish philosophising to Poco's cherry-pie sweetness and light.

For those who bothered to listen, Gram Parsons was possibly the only truly relevant artist to successfully blend rock and country music with any real sense of vision and it should be the initiated's concern that Parsons' death doesn't further obscure that brilliance from reaching its full audience.

Parsons was born in Waycross, Georgia, generally accepted as one of the scuzziest regions of the United States – the son of country artiste Coon Dog Connor and the heir to an expansive estate which was to keep him in comfortable financial stead during his life.

His love of country music and desire to perform it drove him at an early age to appear at local talent contests decked out in extrovert satins, confronting the rednecks with his talent.

Usually, he won out with his audience and eventually he formed a band in Boston along with ex-Barry And The Remains member, Barry Tashien, called the International Submarine Band.

An album was dutifully released, produced by Lee Hazlewood of all people, and featured the first attempts at contemporary country before all the redundant psychedelic kids started desperately getting down to seeds and stems and learning the rudiments of pedal steel guitar. The record was unfortunately never released in England, but is worth investigating at import prices.

Parsons' real rise from the shadows of obscurity came when he joined the Messrs McGuinn, Hillman and deputy drummer Kevin Kelly as the ethnic country and western injection into the Byrds of 1968. McGuinn was at that time firmly into country music, ably supported by Chris Hillman, himself ex-juvenile mandolin player for hillbilly band The Hillmen.

The Parsons-Byrds alliance was short-lived, but enormously fruitful in that it created 'Sweetheart Of The Rodeo', a bona fide masterpiece which, though contractual disruptions prevented Gram from singing on the record, is arguably more Parsons' achievement than that of the band.

A rift over the issue of touring South Africa resulted in Parsons' hasty departure. Chris Hillman left not long afterwards, and he and Parsons set about forming The Flying Burrito Brothers along with session bassist Chris Ethridge, ex-Byrds steel player Sneeky Pete Kleinow and eventually ex-Byrds drummer Michael Clarke.

Gram liked to wear his intake on his sleeve. And his lapels. And trousers

At an early age, Gram appeared at local talent contests decked out in extrovert satins

The reasons why The Flying Burrito Brothers never made it are shrouded in mystery. They were simply the finest country rock band ever, released one absolute masterpiece of an album 'The Gilded Palace of Sin', and one inferior but still excellent second album, 'Burrito Deluxe'.

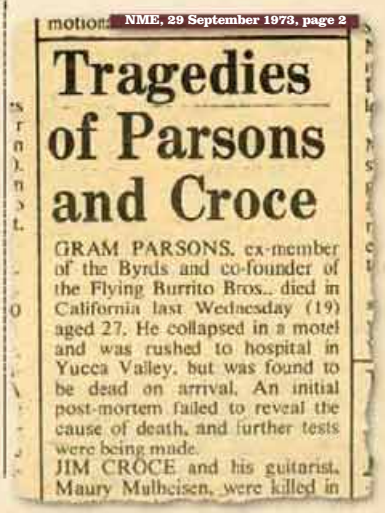
The 'Gilded Palace' cover shot of Parsons grinning, resplendent in Nudie marijuana-leaf design suit with some lascivious cutie entwined around him established an image of sorts and the Burritos seemed to have everything going for them, but their lack of acceptance left Gram apathetic towards the whole project.

He started hanging around with the Rolling Stones (the FBBs had previously recorded Keith Richard's 'Wild Horses', a song which was rumoured to be both for and about Parsons himself), planned a duet album with Richards and gained a heavy reputation for an inflated ego and drug abuse.

Many predicted that Gram Parsons would never surface again, but his signing with Warner Bros and the consequent release of 'G.P.' displayed a quite startling comeback move.

Parsons had wanted Merle Haggard as 'G.P.''s producer, but ended up in the studios with Rick Grech, who did a surprisingly worthy job. The backing musicians were particularly splendid – James Burton, Glenn D. Hardin, Jerry Scheff – Gram Parsons always did things in style.

Nick Kent



motion NME, 29 September 1973, page 2

Tragedies of Parsons and Croce

GRAM PARSONS, ex-member of the Byrds and co-founder of the Flying Burrito Bros., died in California last Wednesday (19) aged 27. He collapsed in a motel and was rushed to hospital in Yucca Valley, but was found to be dead on arrival. An initial post-mortem failed to reveal the cause of death, and further tests were being made.

JIM CROCE and his guitarist, Maury Muhleisen, were killed in

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It's a New Morning so let the man come in and do the Dylan

QUOTE FROM Bob Dylan in 1966:
"I'll never decay. Decay turns me off. I'll die before I decay".

WHAT'S THE MAN been doing in Woodstock all these years? Moseying around the old corral most likely, apart from the occasional foray into the limelight where he's succeeded in dissipating the remaining few shreds of his once-awesome mysterioso by hob-nobbing with the beautiful elite, dressing up like a penthouse hobo and getting his photograph taken with Zsa Zsa Gabor.

That was at Mick Jagger's 1972 birthday party, Dylan's presence there being a rare ostentatious move. More often, his public appearances are restricted to playing harmonica behind, say, John Prine, or else lounging around observing some lightweight talent like David Bromberg down at the Bitter End.

When you actually take into consideration the paucity and ridiculously inferior nature of most of the material put out over the seven years since the release of "Blonde On Blonde", the opening quote takes on an ironic relevance.

"John Wesley Harding" and the "I Shall Be Released"/"Mighty Quinn" basement tapes are probably the pick of the litter, if only because they still display the indelible mark of the old master. From there on, it's definitely strange territory.

"Nashville Skyline" is pleasant in much the same way as a compilation of Roy Orbison's better recordings would be, but who needs yet another Jewish cowboy?

One would be advised to completely ignore "Self Portrait", but then turning to "New Morning" doesn't bring too much relief either.

Proclaimed on release as the much-prophesied second coming of Bob Dylan, its veneer of blissful simplicity now seems bland and useless to these troubled times.

Added to that, the "George Jackson" single only went further to portray Dylan as an artist bewildered and lost within his own former games.

Michael Bloomfield, one-time demon guitarist and still a buddy of Dylan's (having played on "Highway 61 Revisited"), claims that the ageing Messiah is currently in retreat because of all these new honchos coming along with their Martin guitars and VW buses, and stealing the laurels.

Of course, all these new guys are proverbial knee-highs when placed next to Dylan at his old manic best.

No-one has come near to producing lustrous brain-janglers like "Mr. Tambourine Man" or "Lay Down Your Weary Tune" with the same almost transcendental artistry, expressing methedrine paranoia as wittily and vividly as Dylan in the "Bringing It All Back Home"/"Highway 61" period on up to "Blonde on Blonde", full of majestic superstar arrogance with its vivid accounts of the showdowns that take place when all the masks merge into one.

THE SEARCH FOR a new Dylan is no new phenomenon however. Back in the 1965/66 period, the proverbial scene was chock - full of callow youths bent on apeing the whole Dylan stance.

P. F. Sloan, an ex-surf music songwriter, made his initial reputation doing just this back in 1965 — who can possibly forget a classic like "Eve Of Destruction" which he wrote for Barry McGuire before going out in one flashy fizz?

More ethnic mimics could be found lurking within the Dylan camp, hiding in the shadows of the Master's brilliance. Folks like **Eric Anderson,** all buttermilk complexion and cheek-bones like velvet dust-bowls, who flaunted with the whole Dylan number but ended up being recognised more for works like "Violets of Dawn" — vilely wimpish water-colour impressionism — and "Thirsty Boots".

David Blue was another early contendar celebrating the fact by releasing what may well be the ultimate example of electric Dylan sound-alike in the album "David Blue", released in 1967 on Elektra.

Blue, a stocky, moody type with regulation shades, cuts a typical "don't - mess - with - me-I'm-a-poet" pose on the cover.

The song-titles include things like "The Gas-man Won't Buy Your Love" and it's worth picking up on if only for curiosity's sake. Blue recorded two obscure and mediocre efforts for Warner Bros. before signing with Asylum where he released "Stories", an album of songs concerned with junkie expert loves. There's also a song about Joni Mitchell which immediately counts him out as being the new Dylan.

Phil Ochs was another self-styled contender: a rather wearisome figure whom Dylan reportedly loathed, he nonetheless wrote some great songs, not the least of which is "Jim Dean From Indiana", the only respectable paean to James Dean yet written. For the last two years, though, he has claimed official retirement from folkdom, so he's just another also-ran.

So who's that leave? Well, before we start sizing up the current bunch, let us not forget **Arlo Guthrie.**

Seeing Bobby Dylan used old Woody Guthrie as a prime influence and inspiration, it seems only fair that young Arlo should ape the man who used to sing like his pappy. Arlo Guthrie therefore brought up the old Dylanesque ramblin'-boy mystique and pumped it full of the whole hippie-love-peace-and-cosmic-experience schtick.

The result is, of course, "Alice's Restaurant", the veritable Peyton Place of Woodstock Nation, the sheer cuteness of which somehow failed to establish Guthrie as a world-beater.

This might have had something to do with the fact that the kid had little going for him apart from the undeniable fact that he looked good in buckskins and bell-bottoms. Nowadays you see him on album covers spoon-feeding his new-born kid or grinning at a horse. America's answer to **Donovan**? Well, except Donovan, another old Dylan image humper, has infinitely more talent.

But let's speed right on up to the present and examine the young blood ripe and ready to carry on the Zimmerman heritage.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN is probably more responsible than anyone else for all this "New Dylan" drivel that's been slyly insinuating itself around the Music Press of late.

Springsteen was signed to CBS by John Hammond, Snr. and Clive Davis even phoned up to wish him a "Merry Chri-

PERSONAL OPINION BY NICK KENT (TONGUE IN CHEEK AND RACCOON IN POCKET)

May 26, 1973 NEW MUSICAL EXPRESS Page 21

THE PRETENDERS AND CONTENDERS FOR THE MASTER'S CROWN

Left to right: LOUDON WAINWRIGHT/JACKSON BROWNE/KRIS KRISTOFFERSON/JOHN PRINE/SETH NETTLES.

Bruce Springsteen twice reproduced by kind permission Bearsong Music Ltd. ltd.

stmas", which is supposedly unheard of in the company's history.

And then there are all the articles, like Richard Williams' "New Dylan" schtick and the piece in Crawdaddy which boosts him up as some kind of new Messiah.

So you'd almost think something new and exciting was going on? No dice. Aside of two cuts, Springsteen emerges from this first solo album as a word juggler whose images and phrases are as vacuous and glib as Dylan's were mostly vivid and genuinely witty.

I mean, can anyone seriously go into ecstacies about a guy who reels out stuff like: "Madman drummers bummers/and Indians in the summer/with a teenage diplomat/In the dumps with the mumps as the adolescent pumps his way into his hat"?

And get this — "Hey bus driver keep the change, bless your children, give them names/ don't trust men who walk with canes/drink this and you'll grow wings on your feet."

I must tip my cap, however, to two tracks — "Blinded By The Light", which is just about a credible retelling of particularly gritty epiphany sung in Springsteen's Van Morrison/Robbie Robertson dead-skunk whine, and a highly effective piece of hoodlum autobiography called "It's So Hard To Be A Saint In The City", which proves, if nothing else, that Bruce Springsteen does have talent.

Now **Jackson Browne** is a different cup of meat. Initially he was one of the Orange Country Three, so-called by 'Cheetah' magazine because he, Tim Buckley and Steve Noonan were all melancholy solo minstrels and hailed from the same area.

Tim Buckley carried on, leaving his original potential still unfulfilled, and Steve Noonan disappeared, presumably to open an organic food restaurant in Topango Canyon.

Jackson Browne has, however, only recently reared his head from a cloak of intriguing anonymity. Before his first album, released last year on Asylum records, his name would appear credited as composer on some quietly exceptional material like "Shadow Dream Song" and "Jamaica, Say You Will" (recorded by The Byrds and a ray of hope in their twilight days).

He was also commissioned by Nico to write material for her first album "Chelsea Girls", along with Bob Dylan who constantly gave her material. Nico eventually used three Browne songs and one Dylan.

The long-anticipated first album established Browne in the field of the superior balladeer syndrome. "Jamaica" and "I Am A Child In The Hills" were superb efforts, while the rest tended to pale in significance.

Browne's work is pure lightweight, however, when compared to the Old Master — lacking in humour and tending towards extreme romanticism as an inspiration. The next album sounds like it's going to be a veritable supersession with probably an endless series of heartache paeans to Joni Mitchell, so we'll just have to wait and see.

Right now, though, Jackson Browne has infinitely more imagination and ability than most of these clods set on making a living out of being introspective, so only time will tell if the kiddo's got the stamina to be a world-beater.

OF COURSE he could go down the road trod by **Kris Kristofferson** who started out standing tall in his hiking-boots and is now deliberating whether to ditch the horrendous crackerbarrel "macho" image he's earned for himself and settle down, having found Jesus in Rita Coolidge's navel.

Tough decisions these, but this here is one tough man — heavy drinker, big lover, y'know Kris has been around, and underneath that mean growth of beard lies a face that's truly been lived in.

In truth, Kristofferson wrote one great song, "Me And Bobby McGhee", which still stands up even after everyone from Wayne Newton to the Grateful Dead have kicked it around. It was also a song that gave one the distinct feeling that here indeed was a great song-writer.

His second album "The Silver-Tongued Devil And I" helped things along with a set of good material.

Certainly Kristofferson was doing far more for country music than Dylan, but then, with the third release, "Borderland", style somehow inevitably degenerated into mannerism.

The image became set in the mould of the world-weary existentialist stud, getting laid at every turn in that long, lonesome road and discarding the women like empty bottles of tequila.

On the latest, "Jesus Was A Capricorn", we find Kristofferson now getting excessively lovey-dovey with Miss Coolidge, almost ready to embrace the faith. Ah well, one can only wish that the Good Lord grant him the wisdom to keep out of a recording studio until such time as he is able to produce something of any real merit again.

ANOTHER GRAVE minus on Kristofferson's score-record is his introduction to the world of one **John Prine,** the 'New Dylan' of 1972.

If one ever desires to procure a visual definition of the term 'dark', one should look no further than the covers of the two John Prine albums. The second is less impressive, showing a flushed-looking shot of Prine's pudgy bemused chops caught in mid-performance.

The first sleeve is the real cracker, with Prine's dwarfish frame perched on a bale of hay grinning so foolishly that you want to drive a pitchfork up his ass.

For anyone who might not have experienced Mr. Prine, let me start by explaining that he performs his songs using virtually the same chords — G, C and D with maybe an F or an A minor thrown in for good measure.

Prine can also claim to have written the all-time worst song about heroin-addiction — "Sam Stone" — while all other numbers are nullified by his boring vocals and weak melodies.

The question is, just what is Bob Dylan doing playing harmonica behind a guy like this, and recording Prine's "Donald and Lydia" (only John Prine could write a song about masturbation and make it boring)? The answer, my friend, is up there, blowing in the wind.

Loudon Wainwright was a victim of, rather than a contributor to, the Find-A-New-Dylan-By-Tuesday industry. The only similarties were the nasally whining voice, the acoustic guitar and the fact that he wrote his own material. In actual fact, Loudon and Bobby are two very different kettles of piranha.

Where Dylan was grandiloquently allegorical, Wainwright choses to write in a far more personal way. "Motel Blues" from "Album II" was a pitilessly self-flaggelating look at "a lonely rock and roller" trying hard to get laid, and the same album also included a short but devastating piece extolling the merits of immediate suicide.

Where Dylan used a wide-angle lens, Wainwright produces a pocket mirror.

Another essential difference in modus operandi is that Wainwright never takes it upon himself to even pretend to pronounce on social issues. He never attempted to set the world to rights.

All he did was report on the trials and tribulations that he had experienced in his journeys through the swamp of what is laughingly referred to as day-to-day existence.

To avoid any further confusion, listen to "Album I" and "Album II" (Atlantic), or "Album III" (CBS), and check out who's who. You'll find a very unpretentious and honest musical reporter working very hard and being nobody but himself.

Jesse Winchester can also claim to have paid his dues straining under the yolk of this terrible label. Winchester, currently on draft exile, holed up in Canada, has made a couple of albums for Albert Grossman's Bearsville label, one produced by Robbie Robertson and featuring Levon Helm on drums.

That effort was more or less the cult album of 1970, being hailed as a masterpiece by better men than myself (I found it a stone bore).

The record featured two classics of sorts — "Yankee Lady" and "Brand New Tennessee Waltz". The second effort was deemed as particularly inferior to its predecessor, featuring whimsical little vignettes put to melodies of little substance.

PUNDITS OF 'CHIC' are currently tipping a rank outsider as the 'new Bob Dylan'. His name is Seth Nettles, an ex-latrine orderly's assistant and go-go dancer for Klu-Klux-Klan working men's clubs, from Tulipville, Arkansas.

Already controversy is raging over the dramatic entry of this new singer as a result of the release of his new album "Greetings from Tulipville, Ark".

Stephen Holden in 'Rolling Stone' wrote enthusiastically about "the bemused, pungent wit of this canny Ozark," while Ian MacDonald in his dramatic soon-to-be-published "Case Against Seth Nettles" claims that his songs express a feeling of "indolent vulgarity". Still, one cannot escape from the vehement message implied within numbers like the bawdy "Seth Nettles' 115th Wet Dream (Mama won't you pay my laundry bills)", or "Hey, Hey, Jean-Paul Sartre (you old son of a skunk)", a biting reappraisal of existentialism.

When Seth is not playing gigs in laundromats around Arkansas backed by his band, the Up-Chuckers, he can be found in massage parlours or else lounging around his label head's luxury pad with two Tijuana prostitutes.

So where does all this leave us? Is Screaming Lord Sutch the new Bob Dylan? Can John Prine handle his liquor as well as Alice Cooper? Is all well between Jackson and Joni?

Will the projected first fight between Seth Nettles and Judee Sill ever come off, and when will Judy Collins go away?

Is Bob Dylan currently in Malibu to pick up on the new wave of surf-music? The answer, my friend, is blowing . . .

Soundtrack music, titles roll, audiences fall off seats . . .

Gonna rock your GYPSY SOUL

Van the showman rocks Birmingham, July 1973

Melody Maker witnesses the triumphant return of Van Morrison the world's best white blues singer, after seven years away from his British audience

MM, 28 July 1973, page 9

"It's showtime, ladies and gentlemen! And here's the one you've been waiting for – The Caledonia Soul Orchestra with… Van Morrison!"

Birmingham Town Hall, jammed solid, bursts into relieved applause as the small, slightly tubby figure slides between the members of the rhythm section and places himself between the saxophonist and the string quartet.

"*The photographer smiles, takes a break for a while! Take a rest, do your very best, take five honey.*" As he sings, against a second wave of applause, he jams on a pair of shades, and then pushes them back onto his forehead. Time to take care of business.

So why has it taken the Belfast Cowboy seven years to come back and play to the British?

"There were a lot of complications before… the business trip an' all that. Now seemed like the right time."

Any special reason why now?

"No. Everything just came together."

'Blue Money' gives way to his new single, 'Warm Love'. Bill Attwood and Jack Shroer play a piquant muted-trumpet/alto sax line as he sings the lyric, with that "*when push comes to shove*" line so reminiscent of Smokey Robinson. Between songs, Van stands immobile: left hand on the mike, right hand halfway down the stand, rocking it gently back and forth. He's poised, prepared, riding the growing mood, unwilling to let the tension drop.

more intimate details of a song. When you're singing about certain things, everybody can hear the words and what you're saying."

He doesn't object to waiters circulating and glasses clinking?

"No, because usually they put their drinks down when they get into it."

For the first time, the strings – two violins, viola and cello – pick up their bows for 'Into The Mystic'. They supply a perfect

> **"We tried to do a Christmas album last year but we were under too much pressure. You have to start making a Christmas album on January 1 if you want to get it out"**

A slappy backbeat from Dave Shaar's drum introduces Bobby Bland's 'Ain't Nothing You Can Do', given a solid bar-blues treatment with big trumpet-led riffs. Jeff Labes switches from grand piano to Hammond organ for a solo which brings back a whiff of the Flamingo days. This music is meant to communicate feelings.

"I like clubs because you can get into

commentary to the line "*I want to rock your Gypsy soul,*" and as Van sings "*When that foghorn blows,*" Shroer's baritone answers him with a deep, booming blare. The sound, over-resonant at first from the high ceiling, is clearing up now. During the songs, the audience is silently respectful; at the end of each, their enjoyment is plain.

How has he kept more or less the same band together for such a long time? He doesn't answer, but his guitarist, John Platania, explains that they don't all live near each other. Platania and some of the others live on the East Coast, while Van and the strings and horns are in California. That "big silver bird" brings them together for the gigs.

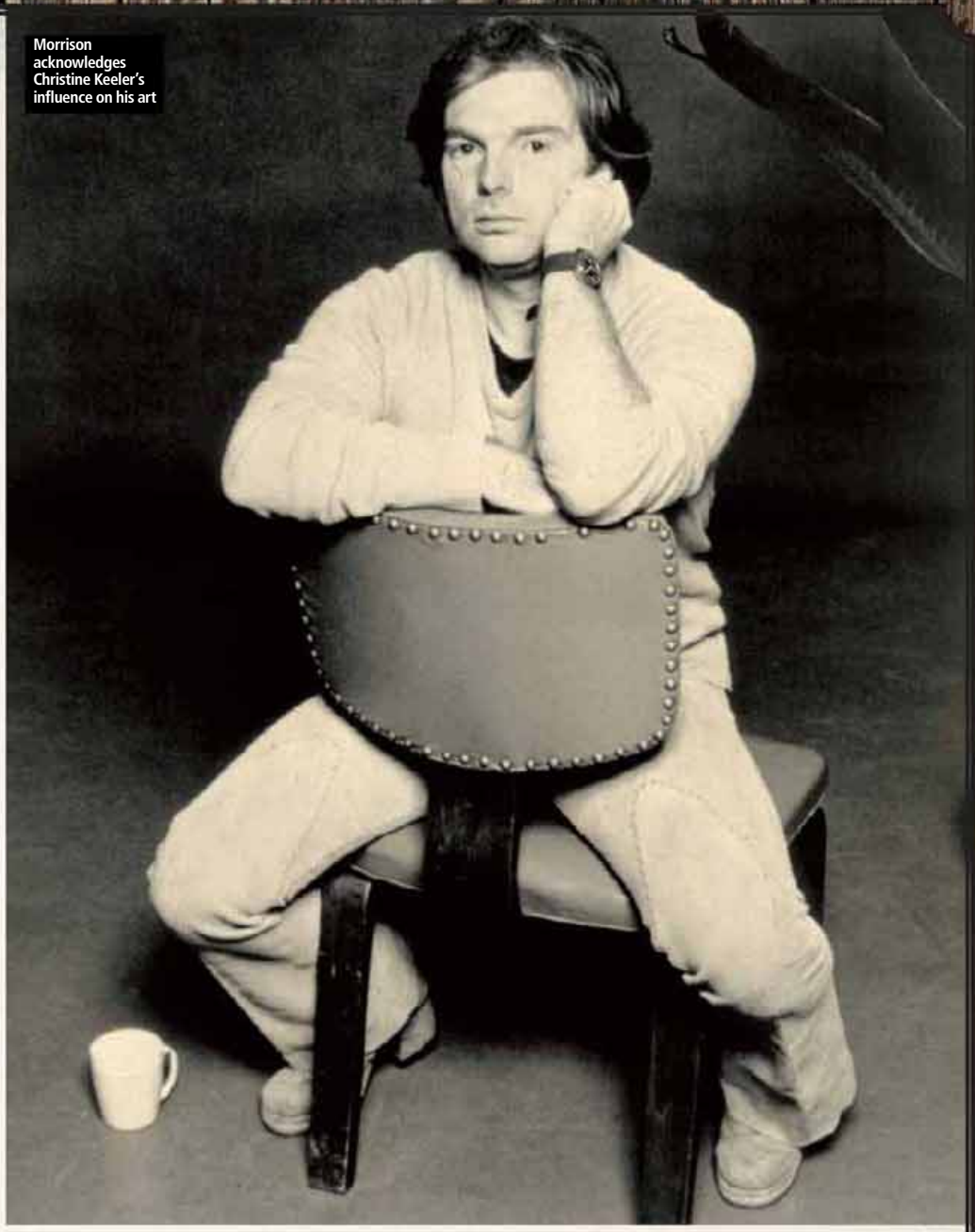
Jeff Labes' rhapsodic blues piano, rippling against the strings, introduces Ray Charles' 'I Believe To My Soul', one of the musical high-points of the entire concert. The stop-time breaks, leaving space for Van's vocals, are incredibly precise and dramatic. While the trumpeter takes a showy solo, Van stands at the rear, hands on hips. They play 'These Dreams Of You' exactly as they did at the Fillmore East in 1970, complete with Shroer's raucous alto solo – he looks just too damn young to play in such a mature, old-time style. The ghosts of a hundred Harlem jump altoists rise and applaud – and the angelically pretty blonde cellist smiles wide.

Is it hard for Van to find the right musicians to play his music?

"Yeah. It's more difficult when you don't know what you're looking for. This is not a singer with a band, or a band with a singer – it's a whole thing."

'I Just Wanna Make Love To You' is slow, oozy, menacing funk, and Platania steps out of his normal role as provider

JILL FURMANOVSKY/REDFERNS



Morrison acknowledges Christine Keeler's influence on his art

of 1001 Unforgettable Fill-Ins to take a stinging solo. Each time he gets to Willie Dixon's title line, Van leaves it open for the audience to join in. At first there's silence, but by the third time of asking they've cottoned on and roar lustily. 'Sweet Thing', from 'Astral Weeks', is a fleet 6/8 swinger, the strings building soaring climaxes with the aid of Shaar's quicksilver drums, while Van plays trick rhythmic games against them. It's perfect – but what a surprise when he follows it with an old Them song, the lovely 'Friday's Child (Can't Stop Now)'. The treatment is full-bodied and satisfying, but somehow properly reticent – nobody in this band wants to be a solo star. Van leaves and somebody announces that there'll be an interval while the musicians take a drink. After which they roar straight into 'Here Comes The Night'.

At last, the audience starts getting up and clapping along, which is what he wants (although he's not about to ask for it). It happens first on 'I've Been Workin'', which is wonderfully fat-sounding, featuring another jagged alto solo shot through with sunshine, and a screaming coda, Van yelling his head off above the band. 'Listen To The Lion' brings the mood right down, misty and floating, the trumpet and tenor sax meshing prettily with the strings.

He's made some classic hit singles in the past, both with Them and as a soloist.

"I like making them. It's fun. I think I'm getting away from that, though. I'd like to be able to release triple and quadruple albums, but sometimes it's really hard to do. A while ago the record company was asking me for singles, so I made some – like 'Domino', which was actually longer but got cut down. Then when I started giving the singles, they asked for albums. I don't mind. As long as they cooperate with me, I'll cooperate with them."

His next release will be a live double-album. And the next studio album?

"A Christmas album, probably. We tried to do it last year, but we were under too much pressure. You have to start making a Christmas album on January 1, if you want to get it out. We'll probably do a few original songs, and some of the old things like 'White Christmas' and that thing, 'Chestnuts roasting on an open fire…' All that stuff. Romantic."

He moves back to the stage again for 'Green', which turns out to be the frog's song from *Sesame Street*. And then it's 'G-L-O-R-I-A', with a strutting feeling more akin to Roy Head's 'Treat Her Right' than to the original Them record. Near the end, he lets the band burn alone until most of the audience is on its feet, bellowing the chorus.

Suddenly the concert is rushing ahead on pure adrenalin. After the relatively sober precision of the first half, the hall is ablaze with joy. Platania whips the band into a gale-force 'Domino', and many people sing along with 'Brown Eyed Girl', which features a startling acceleration into the second verse. Then, assuming a new stance as the master of stagecraft, Van cools it right down for Sam Cooke's 'Bring It On Home To Me' – and, wonder of wonders, moves from his rigid pose into a series of snappy histrionics including back bends and foolery with the mike-stand. The band stay right with him, adding melodramatic punctuations to his gestures. 'Moondance' passes in a finger-snapping blur, and it's noticeable that his voice is beginning to crack. Not surprising – the concert is now 90 minutes old.

"Woodstock was getting to be such a heavy number. People were moving there to get away from the scene – then Woodstock itself starting being the scene"

Why did he move from Woodstock to North California two years ago?

"Woodstock was getting to be such a heavy number. When I first went, people were moving there to get away from the scene – and then Woodstock itself started being the scene. They made a movie called Woodstock, and it wasn't even in Woodtsock. It was 60 miles away. Another myth, you know. Everybody and his uncle started showing up at the bus station, and that was the complete opposite of what it was supposed to be."

Why California?

"Well, I heard they had good oranges there. Actually, I'd been sidetracked: I'd planned to go there a long time before, but I detoured."

Isn't it too laid back?

"No, that's not really where it's at. That's another newspaper number."

As he goes into 'Caravan', the atmosphere feels like it's wired direct to a nuclear power station: "*Turn off your electric light, then we can get down to what is really wrong, reely-rong rillyrong.*" The world's best white blues singer? Maybe – but he's definitely the world's best Van Morrison. The strings make a surprise entrance, with an ethereal four-part invention of great purity and logic. The rhythm section lays out, the strings take it down to pianissimo, and Van smiles knowingly. He waits, waits, waits, and then… "TURN IT UP" and he's slippin' and slidin' across the stage, bending and kicking. It all hangs out.

The audience have given him help, and now he reciprocates in full measure. It's the last song, and he pulls the band to a halt before disappearing.

Richard Williams

NEIL YOUNG
Time Fades Away
Reprise

NME, 13 October 1973, page 26

Neil Young didn't really have too much to say after the days with the Buffalo Springfield. During his reportedly traumatic stay with the band, he had admirably defined his own talents as a song-writer, displaying a unique penchant for writing genuine rock'n'roll songs of innocence and experience, utilizing an effective veneer of a child-like perceptiveness.

It was around the time of 'After The Goldrush' that I felt Young was starting to unnecessarily trade on his former triumphs as yet another victim of the dreaded superstar disease of self-parody. The problems got deeper with 'Harvest' where Young's voice and personality were starting to get tiresome. He sounded wimpish at times, free at others – while his songs were beginning to be built totally around sentiments of the "*Old man look at my life, I'm a lot like you*" ilk. After all his self-professed changes Neil Young had just become another lonely pop-star and, what's more, had lost his original credibility in the process. Now comes 'Time Fades Away', which hits rock-bottom for Young at a time when his popularity has receded noticeably and the critical knives are starting to be sharpened on his behalf.

First it's live, which means it's both slack and badly recorded – Neil Young is hardly the sort of artist who can afford a bad production job. What we get are murky, sloppy attempts at rock'n'roll, built around tiresome chord progressions and obscure nonsense lyrics which one can't begin to be bothered to sort out, simply because the whole sound is such a mess. Young's voice sounds more annoying than ever, never quite hitting the note, screeching when it has to go into a higher register. These criticisms apply to 'Time Fades Away', the stupidly Dylansome 'Yonder Stands The Sinner', 'LA' and the final track 'Last Dance', which could have been a good song were it not for Young's frantic vocal excess (ably abetted here by eager buffoons, Messrs Crosby and Nash). When Neil Young actually pulls off a good performance as in 'Don't Be Denied', we find him wailing on about his personal trials from childhood to superstardom. The chorus is great but we've heard the rest all before, complete with that turgid 'Cowgirl In The Sand' beat. 'Time Fades Away' proves that, like so many others who get elevated to superstar status, Neil Young has now got nothing to say for himself. Whatever did happen to Woodstock Nation? ***Nick Kent***

Young's voice sounds more annoying than ever, screeching when it has to go higher

JACKSON BROWNE
For Everyman
Asylum

NME, 19 January 1974, page 11

Jackson Browne's songs have already been covered by enough respectable people to prove that it's not just a reviewer's fantasy that the guy has real talent. Jackson is easily the best singer-songwriter in country-rock since singer-songwriters became unfashionable.

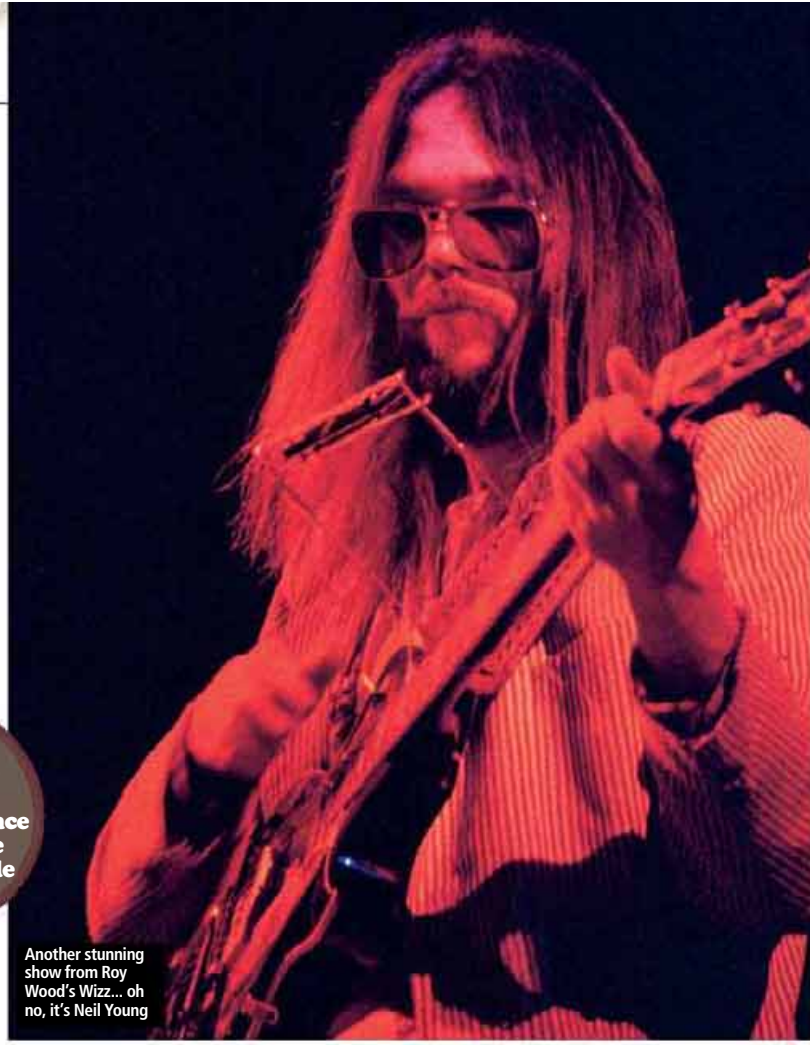
His version of 'Take It Easy', written with Glenn Frey, lacks The Eagles' propulsion, and is a shade nearer country. David Lindley and Sneaky Pete play excellent electric and pedal steel guitar respectively. Pete's pedal steel swoops and curls like a bird of prey circling its victim as the song segues into the beautifully low key 'Our Lady Of The Well', in which Jackson sings about his own bad ways – "*Across my home has crossed the shadow of a cruel and less senseless hand*". The instrumentation is excellent and Jackson's vocals haunting in their usual peerless way.

The album stays in a low-key mood through 'Colours Of The Sun' and 'I Thought I Was A Child', the only cut on which Jackson himself doesn't play, on which Lindley performs a sparkling acoustic solo. Then comes 'These Days' which is slower, more restrained than Ian Matthews' version – a beautiful song. 'Red Neck Friend' – apparently a hit for Jackson in America – is the album's only slice of rock'n'roll and the boogie piano is supplied by 'Rockada Johnnie', who happens to be Elton John.

Jackson's voice is as effortless as ever, never losing control, never straining to reach a note. Even on a rocker his voice has a kind of tranquillity which just oozes out of songs like 'These Days'. On 'Ready Or Not' he tells of how a lady he met one night in a bar – "*It was a real Hollywood scene*" – moved in with him without him realising it: "*I let her do some of my laundry and she slipped a few meals inbetween/The next thing I remember she was all moved in and I was buying her a washing machine*" – and is now feeling funny in the morning and having trouble fitting into her jeans. He wants to know whether he's ready or not to be a father. The song proves how far we've come since 'Shotgun Wedding'.

The album's last two cuts are joined together so perfectly that they're really one song. Joni Mitchell plays electric piano on the first half, 'Sing My Songs For Me', and David Crosby adds a line of harmony on the closing 'For Everyman', which in time could prove a better song than either 'These Days' or 'Take It Easy'. This is an excellent album. ***Steve Clarke***

Jackson is easily the best singer-songwriter since they became unfashionable



Another stunning show from Roy Wood's Wizz... oh no, it's Neil Young

NEIL YOUNG LIVE

MM, 10 November 1973, page 17

It was Guy Fawkes' night on Monday but at London's Rainbow Neil Young's performance was a damp squib. There were moments, but most of the act was frankly tedious. He talked too much about nothing and went on too long – over two hours. He made an ominous comment: "I play more than I talk, so the more I talk the more I play."

Some walked out complaining he was boring, while the majority of the crowd must have been diehard fans indeed. The show was all but stolen by The Eagles, who played a professional, relaxed set in support.

Three-quarters of Young's act was electric, backed by the Santa Monica Flyers, the renamed Crazy Horse. The sound was lazy and loose, featuring Nils Lofgren on piano and lead guitar and Ben Keith on slide.

A desultory hour passed with only half a dozen numbers. One song, 'Please Take My Advice', stood out, with Young on acoustic guitar and harmonica and harmony vocals by Keith. The set apparently closed with a rambling jam on 'Tonight's The Night', a number which had begun the performance.

He came back for another hour solo and at first, luckily things improved. He said he would be making a new album with Crosby, Stills & Nash in a couple of months and here was a song from it, 'Misty Mountain'. It was OK. Then some magic was infused into 'Helpless'.

When they finally got into 'Don't Be Denied', it was a welcome relief. One wished there had been more numbers like that.

The Eagles, four Californians in London to record their third album, proved themselves extremely able musicians with a craftsman-like attitude towards their rich harmony country music. There was sharp banjo picking and neat lead guitar from Glenn Frey and Bernie Leadon. They could rock, too. Just as well. ***Jeff Ward***

It was Guy Fawkes' night, but Young's performance was a damp squib. Most of the act was frankly tedious

REPFOTO

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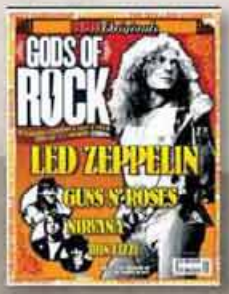

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Can Dylan cure the world's ills? Or has he been superseded by medical science? Andrew Weiner saw a recent show in Montreal

NME, 26 January 1974, page 8

BOB GRUEN–STARFILE/WIREIMAGE

In the days of THE COMET

Everyone is hungry for Dylan. Forty-three days, 21 cities, 40 shows, 658,000 tickets, for a reported gross revenue to Dylan alone of $1.1million.

Montrealers are excited. Dylanmania is the fad of the hour. His name crops up everywhere. 'Knockin' On Heaven's Door' is Number One on the *Gazette* charts. It's played all the time on CKGM, the AM/FM complex co-promoting the concerts.

'Knockin' On Heaven's Door' is a beautiful song from a badly-flawed movie, easily the best thing that Dylan has done in years. But people aren't going to The Forum to see the hit-maker of the hour, they're going to see Dylan the Legend, the Cultural Hero of our rock'n'roll youth, The Man Who Started It All.

You could call that nostalgia, if you like, and certainly there's enough of that in the air. But I'd call it faith. It takes quite a lot of faith to believe that Dylan is actually going to deliver, to come through with a passable imitation of his old strength and power, let alone make any significant comment on the way we live today.

But people here have that faith. Or at least, they've convinced themselves that they do. They're just puzzled enough and uneasy enough and hungry enough to reach out to Dylan just one more time in the hope of not getting burnt again.

People are troubled by the apparent collapse of the rock culture, by all the fragmentations and progressions and proliferations. They're getting older, they feel a long way from home, they think maybe Dylan knows the way back.

Just lately, the media have been very interested in the coming of the Comet, Kohoutek. Much apocalyptic speculation. It's the convenient symbol. News is now that the comet is going to be a washout.

And Dylan?

Not everyone is excited about Dylan's visitation. Some people express strong doubts about his motives. They don't see how they need him anymore – they've moved beyond him.

Why exactly is Dylan doing this tour? To make more money, cashing in on the nostalgia boom, one more revival show? To get back in the public eye and promote his new album ('Planet Waves') to a world that forgot him all too easily?

The Forum is bit ugly, modern. From the outside, a cross between an airport terminal and a metro station. On the forthcoming events sign, Dylan is between the ice hockey and the roller derby.

Inside, it's a regular sports arena. They've put boards over the permafrost ice and seats on the boards but it's still a sports arena. It's packed out, close to 20,000 people, the biggest indoor gig I've ever attended. The audience is predominantly over-20s.

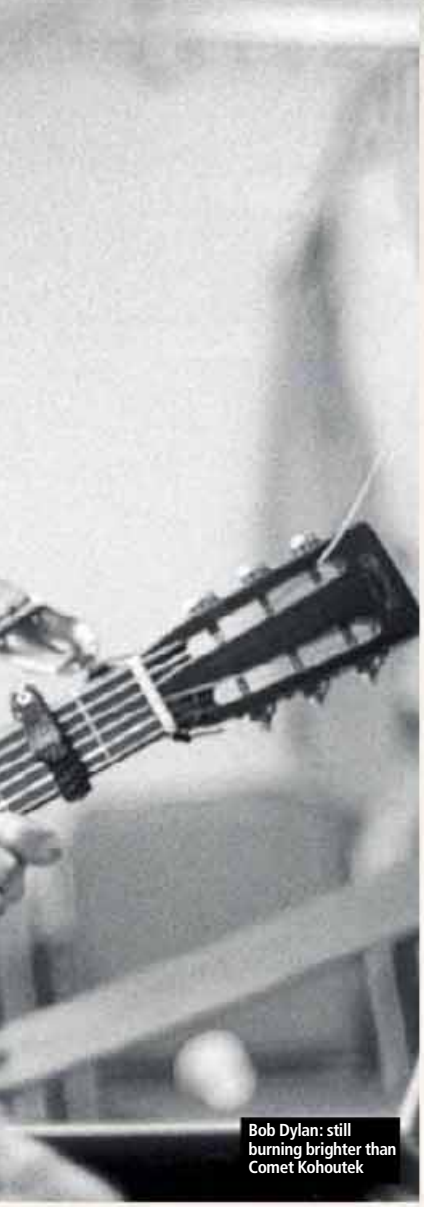
With the lights up and the noise and the smoke you could imagine that you were maybe waiting to see a prize fight, the return of the undefeated world champion. But that isn't cigar smoke rising towards the ceiling, hanging there in a thick grey smog.

Rumour says that Dylan has been both amazed and pissed off by the amount of dope being consumed at these concerts. That he can't see why people should need to be stoned to listen to him.

Maybe that's just ugly rumour, but it has a certain ring of truth about it. Dylan's been away a long time. Mere possession in Montreal, I'm assured, is a criminal offence on a level with illegal parking. But that's no reason why Dylan should approve. Maybe he doesn't park on yellow lines either.

The lights go down. The Band come on. Then Dylan.

He looks alright: black suit, white shirt, shortish hair. He looks a young 30, but he still looks 30.



Bob Dylan: still burning brighter than Comet Kohoutek

Dylan picks up an electric guitar. They go straight into 'Most Likely You Go Your Way And I'll Go Mine'.

Echoes of uncertainty. They're having a little trouble with the sound too, but still this is Dylan, Dylan and The Hawks, sounding just like they did on that amazing bootleg tape of their 1966 Albert Hall show. Taking up where they left off.

Dylan strolls back and forth. He moves well, very casual. His face shows no pleasure or pain, just concentration. Dylan is supposed to be a pretty shy guy. This must be very difficult for him, 20,000 people, all here to see him.

'Lay Lady Lay' is next. It's dreadful.

Dylan's voice, so strong on that first number, goes through strange changes: moments of Elvis and Everlys and Johnny Cash, but he can't instill any interest, and The Band sound stiff and perfunctory. You don't get the feeling that Dylan really wants to sing this song.

Dylan speaks, his first and last comprehensible comment. "That was a love song… this is another love song."

A rocked-up 'It Ain't Me Babe' follows, Dylan playing games with his inflexions, The Band pumping out a passable imitation of the Byrds/Turtles. Folk-rock, no less. And very funny.

'I Don't Believe You'. Acoustic Beatles parody from 1964, rocked-up into more high comedy. Robertson and Danko harmonising at the microphone like Paul and George. Dylan sneering on through.

"I can't understand/She let go of my hand…" It's pretty much the same version they used in 1966. Dylan and The Band play Dylan and The Hawks.

'Ballad Of A Thin Man'. Dylan on piano, eerie and spiteful as ever. 'Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues'. The hits just keep on coming.

Dylan goes off. The Band play on. I'd never seen them before, but everything people say about them it true. They sound exactly like their records.

Dylan took no real chances and The Band don't either. They stick to very familiar stuff and they even do their Dylan numbers. They're supremely professional, they play good songs, but tonight at least they don't look anything like the superstars they've been vaunted to be.

Dylan comes back, wearing shades. He picks up his electric guitar for the best music of the evening. A spectacular, heavy electric 'All Along The Watchtower'. A hard-rock 'Ballad Of Hollis Brown'. A completely stunning 'Knockin' On Heaven's Door'. The Band fill out the gaps on the soundtrack recording. Dylan sings with all his old power.

For just a few minutes, I can really believe that I'm watching the greatest rock'n'roll band in the world. It doesn't last. The lights go up for the intermission.

For the second half, Dylan comes on alone, with just his acoustic guitar. Howls of anticipation. I fear the worst. I sort of hope that someone will yell "Judas!", like that crazy man on the Albert Hall bootleg, only this time in reverse.

This acoustic set will actually gain the greatest applause of the evening. I'm not sure why people seemed to prefer Dylan without The Band, Montreal FM rock radio comes perilously close to easy listening. Maybe people found The Band too noisy. Maybe Dylan on his own reminded them of James Taylor. Maybe they were all closet folkies from way back.

'Blowin' In The Wind'. Enormous applause. But what dumb, trite, boring, international pacifist conspiracy bullshit. Not even fit for old Joanie. Peter, Paul and Mary were about right. I hope that Dylan will follow up with 'Puff The Magic Dragon', but of course he doesn't.

Some nice ones. 'Don't Think Twice, It's Alright', 'Just Like A Woman'. 'It's Alright Ma, I'm Only Bleeding' is embarrassing, Dylan singing his paranoid's shopping-list without trace of emotion. They eat it up.

Worse yet: 'Gates Of Eden', gargoyles-and-all-baroque poetic spewings. One forgets too easily how fallible Dylan always was, how much pure hokum he was sometimes capable of. Still, a lot of people seem to like this song. Maybe it's me who's crazy, unable to perceive its real significance. I don't think so.

I wonder at Dylan's choice of songs. Why these and not others? Because people want to hear them? Or because he wants to sing them? I'm not sure which is worse.

Dylan goes off. The Band return, sounding stronger, more confident, if only by comparison. 'Rag Mama Rag', an excellent 'Loving You Is Sweeter Than Ever'. Dylan comes back. All this to-ing and fro-ing is a mistake, it ruins the community.

Dylan had his old speed, but he lacked the venom, he lacked a real punch

The first new songs of the evening. Two of them. They sound strong enough, I can't be sure, I couldn't make out what they were about. After so much familiar music, they're hard to take in.

The new album could be great, it could be mediocre, I wouldn't know. It just depends on the songs.

After the new songs, very suddenly and all-too-soon, we hit the Big Finish. Dylan mumbles something (from one report, "Great to be back in Montreal") and they're already into 'Like A Rolling Stone'.

Last night, when Dylan began this song, everyone stood up and sang along. I read that in the *Montreal Star*. Apparently everyone else read it too, because they're all standing up and singing along and clapping out of time.

Musically, it's a washout. His greatest song, reduced to a singalong hootenanny.

And yet this is the first moment of real contact between performer and audience. It's phoney, self-congratulatory and forced, but it represents real needs. All evening long it's been unremitting spectacle, Dylan playing and us applauding. Now the audience asserts itself, gives Dylan a thank you he's probably too embarrassed to accept. I just wish it had been a different song.

Dylan and The Band go off.

A technical victory, well ahead on points but no real knock-out. Dylan looked in good shape, he had his old speed, but he lacked the venom, he lacked a real punch.

The clapping and shouting continues. I'm sure they won't come back, but they do. They play the song they started out with, 'Most Likely You Go Your Way And I'll Go Mine', ending the evening as it began, on a note of well-rounded uncertainty.

The uncertain Dylan onstage in 1974

BOB DYLAN
Planet Waves
Island

NME, 26 January 1974, page 16

The Dylan tape is all over town. Dylan's album with The Band has been the subject of a nearly unprecedented amount of music business speculation, the volume of the discussions redoubling with the opening of the tour. One faction claimed that 'Planet Waves' would be an unanswerable return to greatness: a manifestation of Dylan at his best and most stimulating; a true creative renaissance. The other school of thought was, hell, 'Pat Garrett & Billy The Kid' hadn't caused a exceptional amount of heart tremors and that latest CBS release was no comfort at all. So it was with no small degree of anticipation that I settled down in the Sunset Strip offices of Asylum records to hear what was for all practical purposes the first real accept-no-substitutes Dylan album since 'New Morning' way back in 1970.

First of all, 'Planet Waves' is not only the best Dylan since 'Blonde On Blonde', easily outclassing 'John Wesley Harding' in terms of sophistication of musical performance even when it's a hair behind in terms of song content: but it's easily the best Band album since 'Stage Fright'. Indeed, Robbie Robertson and his hatchet-men not only capture all the punch of the old Al Kooper-Mike Bloomfield backups, but add their own unique combination of genial relaxation combined with whip-chord-tough denim funk.

Bobby himself proves once again that no-one living could so do much singin' with such a ragged excuse for a voice, tempering the smoothness and facility of his later recording with a touch of the blurred world-weariness and acid cynicism of the 'Highway 61 Revisited' and 'Blonde On Blonde' stages. Everything that Dylan has been has in some way been assimilated in this album; unarguably a new addition to perhaps the most extraordinary body of work in rock'n'roll.

Dylan ushers you into the album with 'On A Night Like This', a jaunty country-funk thing with elements of both 'I'll Be Your Baby Tonight' and 'If Not For You', but much tougher and harder than that comparison might lead you to believe. "*We've got a lot to talk about and much to reminisce/It sure feels right on a night like this*," sings Bob, sounding righteously loose and taking a few outrageous chances with his phrasing. His harmonica playing hasn't improved any, though. 'Going Going Gone' starts off with Bob's acoustic guitar pitted against some stunning chickin'-pickin' from Robertson. Pure country melancholy with some nice vocal harmonies and a truly lovely melody.

Garth Hudson sounds good enough to allow Bob to forget Al Kooper's phone number for all time, while Robertson is just breathtaking. The intro to 'Tough Mama' has Levon Helm demonstrating how to apply lateral thinking to a drum kit before the rest of the band kick into a tough, bouncy riff with Bob's scratchy harp squawking around the edges.

'Hazel' is an unabashed love song, with a melody similar to the traditional tune 'Alberta' which Dylan did on 'Self Portrait'. Hudson and Robertson sound here like Booker T and Steve Cropper at their utmost hushed and reverent. If Otis Redding had still been alive he'd have taken this all over both R&B and national charts. The next cut is a ballad too. 'Something There Is About You' is one of the album's least distinguished songs. It harks back to New Morning's 'Time Passes Slowly', though it's a lot funkier. "*Something there is about you recalls a long forgotten truth*," goes the lyric with Bob dragging off the end of the last word in each line. Again, the Band does a tight-rope walk between Nashville and Memphis.

The first side ends with 'Forever Young', and a different arrangement of the same song opens the second side also. A lot of folks are saying that beautiful Bob is trying to pad the album, but the two versions are so different that each one justifies its presence here.

The side one cut is slow and deliberate with everyone laying back so far that the instrumentation sounds far sparser than it actually is. Dylan is ostensibly wishing whoever it is that he's addressing a long and happy life, but his vitriolic delivery give the lie to the cordiality of the lyrics. In contrast to the rainy night feel of the first version, 'Forever Young 2' is crisp and funky with some ominous rumbling guitar and an almost Bo Diddley rhythm. As ever, Bob's harmonica solo makes you feel like the harp is falling out from his mouth. You can square dance to this one.

'Dirge' is the song you'll play to convince your friends Bob didn't lose all his brains

'Dirge' is the album's killer cut, the one you'll play to convince your friends that Bob didn't lose all his brains when he fell off his Harley. One particularly telling line: "*I've paid the price for solitude, but at least I'm out of debt.*" You'll have to go back to 'John Wesley Harding' to find a Dylan song with as much power and atmosphere.

'You Angel You' is a necessary upper after the intensity and gloom of 'Dirge'. Just think of it as an enjoyable interlude, a good time to go to the kitchen and grab another beer.

'Never Say Goodbye' is another love song. The Carpenters could do it. The closing cut, 'Wedding Song' is weird. For one thing, the guitar sounds exactly like early Donovan. It's Bobby and his box all the way, and you'll be crooning this one to your beloveds until the end of the summer. "*It's never been my duty to remake the world at large/And it's never been my intention to sound a battle change*," he announces towards the end of the cut, almost echoing the sentiments of 'My Back Pages'.

'Planet Waves' is a good Dylan album, which is pretty lucky all round, otherwise David Geffen would have been saddled with a turkey and a few more of us would've given up on Bobby for good. It appears that Dylan has reconciled his rural seclusion and family-man cosiness with his one-time radical crusading. Musically, his self-imposed retirement has lost him nothing and gained him much. Unless he vanishes for another eight years and starts recording the Scott McKenzie song book, I think we can all start trusting him again.

Maximilian Smith

The Post-crash Bob Dylan, reconciling cosiness with crusading

JONI MITCHELL
Court And Spark
Asylum

NME, 2 February 1974, page 20

Of all the singer-songwriters, male or female, only Joni Mitchell has maintained a consistently high standard. While the Taylors, Stillses, Youngs, Kings et cetera, et cetera have all blown it somewhere along the line, some more often than others and some hardly ever at all, Ms Mitchell is still yet to produce a bad album.

The songs are more honest than on her previous albums, and several indicate a coming to terms with herself, with the "*beauty and the imperfections*" as she says in 'The Same Situation'. The music has also changed. Last album 'For The Roses' had a lot more instrumentation with elaborate brass and woodwind. 'Court And Spark' takes it a little further and the arrangements are more complex. Her voice, once the voice of a folk singer full stop has also changed – it's a little huskier, mellower yet with more vitality than ever before. She hardly ever reaches the shrieking falsetto of, say 'Big Yellow Taxi'.

Joni's voice is mellower, yet with more vitality than ever before

The title track opens the record. It's a love song (its title is an American colloquialism which means to woo and to have) and opens with familiar piano before bass guitar, percussion, hovering electric guitar and drums come in and fill the sound. Then it returns to the sparse opening with just acoustic guitar to fill the sound. She's never been in better form vocally. 'Help Me', with its neat little flute phrases and her own back-up vocals is charming and lyrically the least enigmatic song on the record. "Free Man In Paris" is about the artist as seen by the manager or publicist, the guy "*Stroking the star maker machinery/Behind the popular song.*" The music really moves along with its delicious layers of acoustic guitars. What her songs lack in melody is made up for by the arrangements which are always stunning.

'People's Parties' is heavier lyrically and one of those songs where she paints a word picture of who she's singing about. She sings: "*Photo beauty gets attention/Then her eye paint's running down/She's got a rose in her teeth/And a lampshade crown.*" Then she reverts to personal comment saying she's got no sense of humour and a weak and lazy mind. In fact her sense of humour is demonstrated elsewhere on the album only too well.

'Down To You' is another song of realisation "*Everything comes and goes/Pleasure moves on too early/And trouble leaves too slow… it all comes down to you.*" Whether it's you-me or you-someone else I'm not sure. But surely the enigmatic quality of her lyrics makes them all the more interesting. The

back-up vocals are beautiful and the extended orchestral section is reminiscent of some of the music on 'For The Roses'. The single, 'Raised On Robbery', is in complete contrast. It rocks like a bitch and the lyrics, in which she plays the part of a hooker, are good dirty fun as she sings "*I'm a pretty good cook/I'm sitting on my groceries/Come up to my kitchen/I'll show you my best recipe.*" Sleazy brass leads into the old Annie Ross song 'Twisted'. Why she's doing this song I don't know. Isn't there already enough of this kind of music being revived without her doing it! OK, it's funny, with background voices by Cheech & Chong but wouldn't one of her own songs have been a better choice?

The album seems to disappear under the old stylus at amazing speed and leaves the listener wanting more. I don't want to say whether I like this as much as 'Blue' or 'For The Roses' since it would be churlish as Joni Mitchell is so consistently good. Buy this record, it's pure enjoyment. ***Steve Clarke***

ROY HARPER
Valentine
Harvest

NME, 23 February 1974, page 41

This album is going to sell a lot of copies, and not just because Jimmy Page and Keith Moon are on it either. It's going to sell because more people are now prepared to listen to Roy Harper than ever before, and, last but not least, because it's a very pretty little album indeed.

Pretty little album? Roy Harper? Indeedy. 'Valentine' is an album of love songs, and though only one of them is silly and trivial, it's still the most approachable album he's yet made. 'The Lord's Prayer' from 'Lifemask' was brilliant, sure, but its's not exactly easy to take. Most of this album is very, very easy to take. He opens up with a sweet little song about the joys to be derived from carnality with young girls below the age of consent, but there's no Dr Hook nudge-nudge gross-out tactics involved. It's both very delicate and very erotic.

'Male Chauvinist Pig Blues', despite the presence of Messrs Moon and Page, is something of a washout, because the milksop production completely emasculates both the guitar and the drum sound. If only Pagey had produced this one himself… Good song, though.

'Acapulco Gold' is just plain irritating. So Roy's getting rolled smoking Acapulco Gold and his lady's baking the Afghani. So what? Who gives a burnt roach what he's smoking? Those nudge-nudge songs about dope are very passé, and if Roy wants to write a dope song, he should write one that actually says something more about weed than "*smoking rope is crazy*".

Everything else on the album, with the exception of '*Ché*' (another tedious piece of radical chic) is quite startlingly pretty, especially 'Forever', recently incarnated as a single. 'Valentine' is a nice album, but there's more to Mr Harper than this. If this album sells, let's hope that it moves a few copies of 'Lifemask' and 'Stormcock' in the process. ***Charles Shaar Murray***

MIKE O'MAHONY/REDFERNS

BOB DYLAN/THE BAND
Before The Flood
Island

NME, 29 June 1974, page 19

Sitting here in Britain, following Stateside reports of Dylan's recent American tour, we were all grabbing fist sized pinches of salt for every ecstatic sentimentality the US critics drooled… I mean, we'd all heard 'Planet Waves', we knew the score. Forget it.

To judge from the high spots on this album, the rumours were as near true as doesn't much matter. 'Before The Flood' is the best Bob Dylan album since 'John Wesley Harding' – and if David Geffen hadn't made the managerial compromise of giving over a complete side to The Band when reportedly scorching Dylan performances of 'Gates Of Eden', 'Times They Are A-Changin'', 'It's All Over Now Baby Blue' and 'Mr Tambourine Man' were just lying there smouldering in a can, this double set could've outlived even the legendary 'Albert Hall 1966' bootleg. A plague upon contractual expediences.

What is here is uneven to say the least, but there is a clutch of tracks that reach peaks even '66 vintage Dylan would've been surprised by: coming from a man who just released one of the lamest albums by a major artist in the last five years, the success rate is positively astounding.

Side one gets off with a storming 'Most Likely You Go On Your Own Way...' Immediate impressions are (1) The Band sound far looser than they've been in any circumstances since '66; (2) the energy level is alcohol high and the tempo correspondingly fast and rough, even aggressive; and (3) Dylan's vocals are extremely far out – hoarse last chance howls, the end of each line bellowed out like a hopped-up football commentator exulting over a goal scored from 40 yards out in the 90th minute.

Dylan roars into 'Rainy Day Women' with the same abandon. It's a total transformation of the in-crowd downer the song was on 'Blonde On Blonde'. Now it's theme music for the global village's very own pub. The first approximately controlled vocal occurs on 'Knockin' On Heaven's Door'.

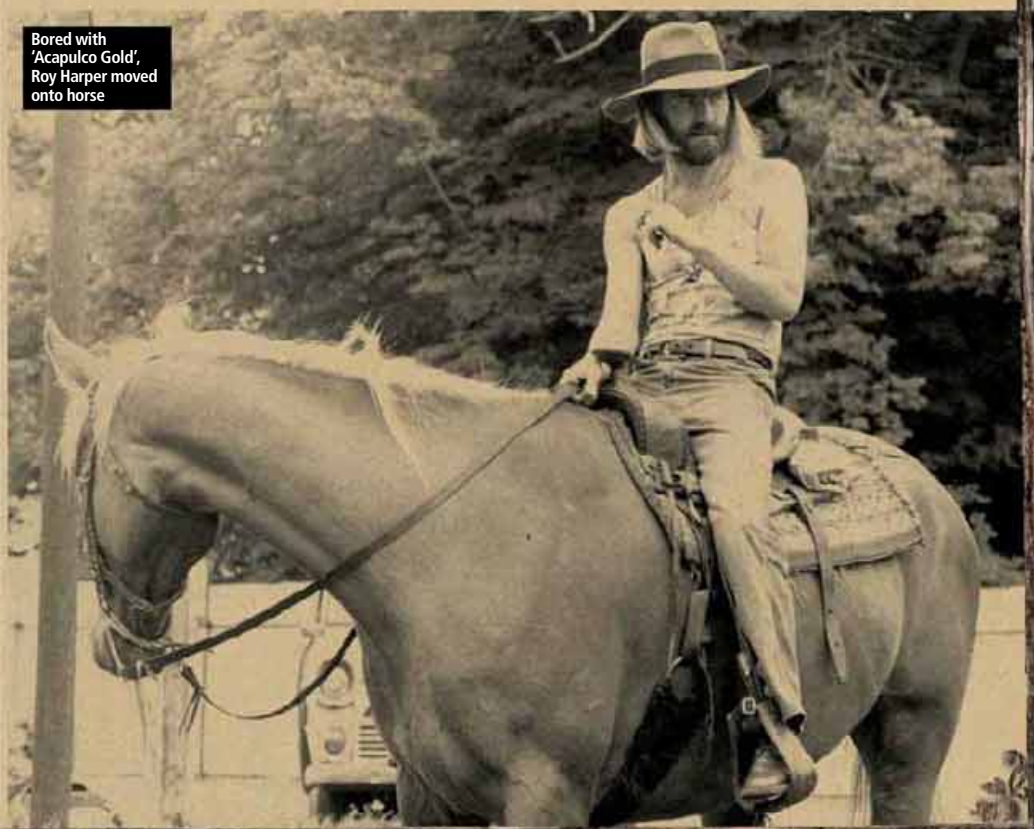
'It Ain't Me Babe' is next, sounding '66 instead of '64. Dylan's version of 'Another Time, Another Place' is a riotous rock-out, driven in deep by Helm and Danko, and coloured by some amazing organ from Garth Hudson, who's on magical form on nearly every track. Side one closes with a sped up, ferocious 'Ballad of a Thin Man'. Great Dylan vocal, dynamite fills. A star track and sore throats all round.

Side two is just The Band. They do 'Cripple Creek', 'I Shall Be Released', and a new number called 'Endless Highway' on which Robertson draws applause for a solo that isn't really that neat, plus 'The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down' and 'Stage Fright'. They do okay, but okay isn't good enough after the promise of side one.

Dylan's acoustic set is presented in severely truncated form on the first half of side three. He takes 'Don't Think Twice' at the speed of the average hoot 'n' holler stuff from his debut album. Reversing the process applied to 'It Ain't Me Babe', Dylan follows this one with a folk period interpretation of 'Just Like a Woman'. It was always a dull song and doesn't get anymore interesting here. And now ladies and gentlemen – wipe out. The track that should've kicked off side two and led the rest of the set straight up to the sky. 'It's Alright Ma, I'm Only Bleeding' is a truly shattering performance, taken at impossible speed, every word crystal clear and phrased beautifully– the centre of the album and Dylan's finest achievement since the Albert Hall cut of 'Like A Rolling Stone'. Everything is perfect: the way Dylan turns the melody upside down, the supernatural "presence" on his voice, the feeling of immense speed (like one of those London to Brighton 60-second films) – real Last Afternoon Of Earth stuff. And when Dylan shouts out "*I've got nothing more to live up to*", it's an expression of absolute triumph, of freedom finally achieved. We do have nothing more to live up to – and isn't that inspiring? On this classic performance it's completely devastating.

It's an expression of absolute triumph, of freedom finally achieved

Despite the many drawbacks of 'Before The Flood', it's still one hell of an album. So some of the vocals are overstrained or miscalculated, so Levon Helm's galloping drums do begin to pall on side four, so Robertson isn't on top form. There's still two stunning highs ('It's Alright Ma' and 'All Along The Watchtower'), plenty of better-than-good performances, dollops of miraculous Hudson keyboard-work and the cerebral-overload atmosphere in general. If the decision-makers had gone the whole hog and put on all the rest of the reputedly cosmic stuff 'Before The Flood' would have very probably taken off and gone into orbit around Mars or something. Still, never mind. You can't always get what you want and nothing can take away what we do have here. ***Ian Macdonald***



Bored with 'Acapulco Gold', Roy Harper moved onto horse

A VAN FOR ALL SEASONS

"The best interview I've ever done," was Van's own verdict of this marathon session with Ritchie Yorke. Certainly the enigmatic Irish expat has never talked so revealingly

Van Morrison: "And I'll tell you another thing I hate... *youse*."

NME, 23 February 1974, page 11

Let's talk about your history. The background bio stuff on you – is it accurate?

A lot of it isn't. I just started playing in groups. It was the late '50s, I think. That was the time that skiffle was really big. It didn't matter what you played, everybody called it a skiffle group. I did that for a while then I went on the road. We had about 20 different names – none of them really meant anyt hing.

We played in Germany for a while. I got back from Germany in 1963 and these guys were talking about opening an R&B club in Belfast. They knew I was into R&B – more than anybody else who was around at that time.

There wasn't much media exposure of R&B, was there?

No, but it started. You had to go to special shops where they sold jazz records. It started to pick up around the end of '63, '64.

Who really dug that sort of music?

People working in record stores – who didn't care whether they sold them or not, they were so much into the music. And that's how I got R&B singles.

I've been into blues since I can't even remember how old I was. My father had a collection of blues records. Muddy Waters, Sonny Terry, Brownie McGhee. So I was hearing it constantly. I had Bo Diddley records when people thought Bo Diddley was… nobody knew who Bo Diddley was. I used to play them to people and they couldn't figure the music out. I used to play musicians Bo Diddley records and Muddy Waters things and they didn't know how to react to it. And about three years later, an English group would record one of the songs, right, and they'd come along and say, "Did you hear that? What was that? But so-and-so's done it so it must be alright." A lot of kids who came up with The Beatles don't even know who Arthur Alexander is.

After that you went to England...

Yeah, I guess we moved there for a while. There was more work happening there… There wasn't a lot happening in Northern Ireland and we got tired of hassling with people who were wrecking themselves – but I guess there'll always be people wrecking themselves, no matter what…

When was Them formed?

That was in Belfast. Actually the way I put it is I think Them lived and died at the Maritime Hotel, as a group. Nobody really knew what Belfast meant. It didn't mean anything. So that's where we did our thing – at the Maritime Hotel. And we did gigs outside there too, but the Maritime was like a stomping ground.

We ran the place too, the whole show. Even making records, we were out of the element. The way we did the numbers and all that was more spontaneity, more energy, more everything… 'cos we were feeding back off the crowd, off the audience. And it was never really captured 'cos there were no live recordings, not that I knew of.

I guess the band was never the same after that. People were just getting browned off, you know – a couple of guys left. It was like the whole thing was out of context. And the record company was trying to promote it as something it wasn't. They were calling us British when we were really a Northern Ireland group.

When did you first think of moving to America?

I decided by accident actually, because after Them's second album, they'd been digging the West Coast of America. We'd had a two-month tour booked and the time I had off gave me time to look around, mainly in California.

I really dug California, and I wanted to go back there. Somebody British saying this sounds weird but I think America was more receptive to me, my type of music and where I was coming from than anywhere else. As far as ideas and stuff like that.

It attracted me because people understood, for probably the first time, what I was talking about. For Belfast, my ideas were too far out. In England, I don't know whether they were too far out, or I wasn't "in" or something like that, but perhaps I was even ahead of time, you know. We used to play clubs and Jimi Hendrix would come up and sit right in front and listen all night. I don't know, the musicians dug it but the general public didn't know what we were into.

So WB signed you and you went in to do 'Astral Weeks'?

Right, 'Astral Weeks' was a whole concept from beginning to end. It was like all thought out up front. It was supposed to be an opera. I mean by opera, multiple visual sketches. When I'd written the songs – even before I'd done the album – there was talk of a film and all that. We tossed that around for a while, but it didn't happen.

'Astral Weeks' itself is a transformation song. It's transforming energy… or going from one source to another, with it being born again, like a rebirth or something. I remember reading something somebody said about you have to die to be born… it's kinda one of those songs where you see the light at the end of the tunnel. I don't think I can elaborate on it any more than that.

'Cyprus Avenue' – is there such a place?

Yes. Cyprus Avenue is in Belfast. There's a lot of areas in Belfast where there was a lot of wealth – and that was one of them. It wasn't far from where I was brought up. A different scene, financially or whatever you call it. To me it was a very mystical place, a whole avenue lined with trees, a place where I could think… instead of walking down one

Van in arguably the only place he was ever happy – on stage

road and being hassled by 40 million people, you could walk down there and there was nobody…

Tell me something about 'Madame George'...

The title confuses one, I must say that. The title was 'Madame Joy' but the way I wrote it down – don't ask me why – the song is a stream of consciousness… 'Madame George' just came right out. It's basically about a spiritual feeling. It may have something to do with my great aunt, whose name was Joy. Apparently, she was clairvoyant. That may have something to do with it.

Are you still happy with the original performance?

Oh yeah, I mean, that album just stands out. 'Ballerina' – that one, I don't really know. I had a romantic stage in my head about the San Francisco outlook and I was sitting in this hotel, you know, and I had a flash about this actress in an opera house in a ballet, and I think that's where it came from. I think the song may also possibly be about a hooker.

'Slim Slow Slider' is about somebody who is caught up

> "There was no school for people like me – we were freaks in the full sense of the word"

in the big city – and maybe dope, I'm not sure. A lot of these things are not really personal – that's why I have to interpret them, you know. A lot are just speculation on a subject. For example, one of the songs, 'Moondance', was the result of a dream about Ray Charles being shot down, and that started off the whole song – things like that.

Was the reaction to 'Astral Weeks' better than you expected?

Let me tell you something. I don't think a lot of people know this, but when that album came out I was starving, literally. The critical acclaim was really good. A lot of people I knew really liked that album and I knew they weren't just putting me on.

How do you feel overall about 'Street Choir'?

I really don't think that album is saying much – there really isn't anything. Later on I realised what the song 'Street Choir' meant. 'Street Choir' was an acapella group.

I wanted these certain guys to form an acapella group so that I could cut out of a lot of the songs acapella with just maybe one guitar. But it didn't turn out, it got all weird…

Somewhere along the line I lost control of that album. And somebody else got control of it and got the cover and all that shit. I mean, I knew what was happening to it, but I couldn't stop it, because I'd given my business thing over to someone else, and although I had final approval, they just did the wrong thing… It was the sort of thing where someone was on your back to get something cranked out, even though they knew it was wrong. A couple of the things on it were hits, but the album didn't sell very well. I'm glad.

'Tupelo Honey' is another one that I wasn't very happy with, songs that were left over from before. It wasn't really fresh. I was really trying to make a country and western album. I never really listen to that one much. I just don't connect with it. The albums I do connect up with are 'Moondance', 'Astral Weeks', 'St Dominic's' and 'Hard Nose'. The 'Street Choir' and 'Tupelo Honey' albums, I've got a bad taste in my mouth for those.

You're not a big fan of the music industry...

My record company and I have disagreements – there's no doubt about that.But I don't think there's enough artsists who help other artists, to make people aware it's not just a free for all. I think one of the few people that is doing that is Frank Zappa.

I think Zappa is a very intelligent human being. He's the only person I've heard in interviews really say things – about how it works, what you shouldn't let happen and what he thinks should happen. I think it's really good that he's outspoken about that. I'd like to hear more people who are really successful telling it like it really is, instead of pretending about it. The real problem seems to be that the music means so little in the music industry. It's really amazing. People seem to get to a certain point and they're not into the music anymore – they're just into gimmicks or something.

David Bowie? Even Mick Jagger?

I just can't figure them out. Maybe they're genuine. God knows? I don't. I always think they've got talent, but…

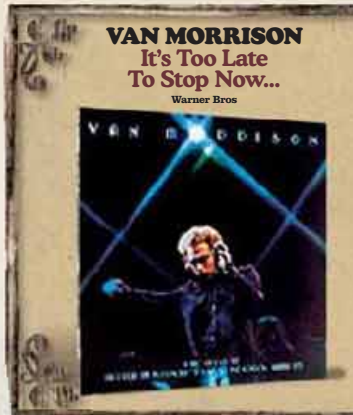
Does music mean a hell of a lot to you?

It's in me, it's just got to come out. It was really difficult for me in school because the only thing I could get into was English. There was no school for people like me – we were freaks in the full sense of the word because we didn't have the bread to go to a school where we could sit down and do our thing. Most of what was fed me didn't really help me that much. Like in music class we'd sit and blow recorders or something… and that's education?

Do you go to many other concerts?

No, I don't go at all. There's really nothing I want to see, you know. I don't really think people are saying much as far as rock'n'roll goes. To me, Chuck Berry was saying more

IAN DICKSON



NME, 9 March 1974, page 15

Ever since Van Morrison moved out to the West Coast to do his own things in his own way, he's produced a series of albums of exceptionally high quality and maintained a mercurial standard of performance, though at his best he's second to none.

'It's Too Late To Stop Now' is the distillation of the finest moments of his concerts at the London Rainbow, the Los Angeles Troubadour and Santa Monica Civic Hall on his 1973 tour. It comprises two tracks each from 'Hard Nose The Highway', 'St Dominic's Preview' and 'Street Choir', one from 'Astral Weeks' and three from 'Moondance'. In addition, there are two tracks from the heady days of Them, and six of his past favourite songs. It thus acts as a summary of his work to date, while including useful notes on background listening.

'Into The Mystic' is an important success as it demonstrates that he has new things to add even to his own classics. He changes it from a brass-based to a string-based song. Indeed, the string of four play a consistently important role – 'Caravan', especially, features an extraordinary solo by the first violinist, Nathan Rubin.

An eight-minute track, 'Listen To The Lion' is also thoroughly successful. The song moves to a beautiful cadence which leaves the audience in a hushed state of perceptible awe.

The song leaves the audience in a hushed state of perceptible awe

But what makes the album special are the "new" songs. Morrison's roots in R&B, soul, gospel and jazz are revealed as he performs them with understanding and respect for the originals. His interpretation of the Willie Dixon song, 'I Just Wanna Make Love To You' can take its place alongside both the original and the Stones version. His timing is immaculate, and his rapport with an excited audience is the kind of thing that makes this album worth ten times what Warner Bros are asking for it. ***Bob Woffinden***

NEIL YOUNG
On The Beach
Reprise

NME. 20 July 1974, page 14

Despite all signs to the contrary I still rather hoped Neil Young had it in him to make another good record. His last two albums didn't befit his superstar status but it was just about possible to excuse them since neither were studio albums; 'Time Fades Away' was a collection of new songs recorded live, while 'Journey Through The Past', a hotch-potch of live material and studio outtakes (including only one new song), was essentially a movie soundtrack.
It really did look as though Young was afraid of getting himself into a recording studio again and instead preferred to put out something assembled relatively quickly to let his public know that he was still alive and making music. Alternatively, it might have been his record company who wanted to release Neil Young records – and Young, "*A millionaire through a businessman's eyes*", who demurred.
But it wasn't only the album that indicated Young's creativity was on the wane. Anyone who saw him at the Rainbow last November, will remember Neil Young as a very drunk, slightly-comic, slightly-tragic figure as he sang a bum set almost entirely made up of new material. He opened and closed the concert with a song called 'Tonight's The Night', and according to band member Nil Lofgren that would be the title of the next album. Actually, 'Tonight's The Night' is nowhere to be seen on this album, but I think one of the songs, 'For The Turnstiles', from that set has made it on to 'On The Beach'. 'Tonight's The Night' was dropped for a title and 'Human Highway' was its replacement, later abbreviated to 'Human High'.
It was then announced that 'On The Beach' would be the title of the new Neil Young LP. 'On The Beach' is, whichever way you look at it, a depressing record. It's a downer in that depression is the mood that much of the album evokes. But it's also depressing because Neil Young isn't writing as well as he used to – perhaps the overwhelming sense of gloom that now seems to surround him is preventing him from creating; in Young's case pain isn't genius – and he and the rest of the musicians on 'On The Beach' aren't playing as well in their former days.
Neil Young was never exactly a barrel of laughs, as he sings in 'Revolution Blues' which is, along with 'See The Sky About To Rain', the strongest cut; but here he sounds consecutively bitter, hopeless, cynical and world-weary. More than once, he refers to his past, before he'd made it, as the Good Old Days. In the opening of 'Walk On', released as a single in America and the only cut that could possibly be described as an upper, he sings: "*I remember the good old days, I stayed up all night getting crazed/Then the money wasn't so good, but we still did the best we could.*"
The closing and complete downer song 'Ambulance Blues' has him singing similar lyrics: "*Back in the old folkie days, the air was magic when we played.*"
Without any kind of exaggeration it's impossible not to feel the death-vibe that emanates from side two. It's like listening to a yodelling corpse. At the same time it's powerful music that is difficult to ignore. You may not like it but it'll make you feel something (and probably leave you with a bad taste clinging to your epiglotis).
The instrumentation of all the cuts on side two, 'On The Beach', 'Motion Picture' and 'Ambulance Blues', only increases the overwhelming sense of melancholy – like the way mouth-harp and violin blend on 'Ambulance Blues'. What sounds like somebody dropping silver into a tambourine adds to the strangeness of 'Ambulance Blues'.
None of the three songs is about any one thing in particular. When Young sings the cutting "*I never knew a man tell so many lies/He had a different story for every set of eyes*", is it intended as a reference to Nixon? Or any one of his brands of American politicians? Either way it's a viciously strong line.
There doesn't seem to be any connection to the various images Young throws out except they're all down. He sings about a woman who's only real when she has her make-up on, about waitresses crying in the rain and even Old Mother Goose(fairytale imagery) isn't happy in 'Ambulance Blues'. Neither are her children.
Young sounds most alive, bitter and angry at the same time on 'Revolution Blues' The song is very Dylanesque and is one of the few cuts where the band play well. It's full of urgency and he spits out the words: "*I've heard Laurel Canyon is full of famous stars/But I hate them worse than lepers and I'll kill them in their cars.*"

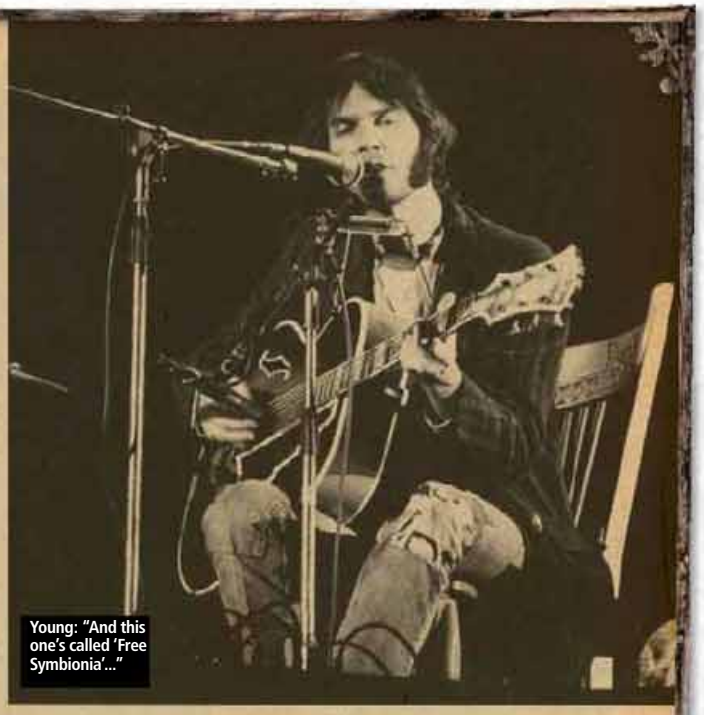
Whichever way you look at 'On The Beach', it's a depressing record

That statement, coupled with the fact that he regards the old folkie days better than present times indicates that Young isn't too keen on stars being a star.
In 'Walk On' he sings: "*I hear some people bin talking me down/Bring up my name, pass it around,*" which makes the point that he doesn't like being well known if it means being publicly owned.
'Vampire Blues' is the ultimate nod-out boogie with Young's voice and the band's playing always on the verge of disintegration. 'See The Sky About To Rain' is the album's best song – but is spoilt by the arrangement.
Young plays reverb electric piano and drummer Ralph Molina goes into the familiar Neil Young/Crazy Horse broken rhythm. The song was written a few years back and a far superior version is included on a bootleg recorded at The LA Music Centre in '71. There Young's acoustic accompaniment enhanced the solitude which the lyric evoked. It's significant that while 'See The Sky About To Rain' isn't exactly 'Merry Christmas'; neither does it reek of impeding doom.
Overall the sound is sparse and the arrangements are over simple. Young's guitar playing isn't inspired and what there is of it is sloppy. If you're the kind of person who likes listening to Leonard Cohen records on your own, late at night with just a candle for light, then you'll like 'On The Beach'.
Me, I'm going to keep on listening to his first three albums and forget he ever made this.
Steve Clarke

NME, 17 August 1974 , page 12

Right Neil Young is in kind of an invidious position. 'On The Beach' is his equivalent of Lennon's 'Plastic Ono Band' album in terms of being a reaction to and rejection of his earlier work but, whereas Lennon's change was both gradual (starting, really, from 'Help!') and included in its course pieces like 'Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds' Young has made his artistic stock-in-trade the investigation of personal pain from the very beginning.
And that's the catch, really. In our July 20 issue, Steve Clarke attacked 'On The Beach' as too negative too self-pitying –"whichever way you look at it, a depressing record. It's a downer in that depression is the mood which most of the album evokes." Steve's a devotee of Neil Young. Probably knows the man's work in twice the careful detail that I do.
I'm *not* a Young devotee. I could never totally accept his employment of self-pity as a creative focus. Sometimes I felt it a shade dishonest or manufactured (eg 'Tell Me Why'); other times the whole thing got just a little too deliciously lush (eg 'When You Dance I Can Really Love'). Like Leonard Cohen. A sugared pill just the correct distance into commerciality to be still believable. And that could be the main reason why the majority of Neil Young fans won't get into 'On The Beach'. The pill is no longer sugared –either by Sweet Melody or by garlands of posies. Young has, quite simply, welched on the deal. Which, in turn, suggests he's Woken Up.
'On The Beach' isn't, as previously interpreted, the fag-end of Neil Young's romance with rejection, but actually a quite positive piece of work in the Merciless Realism bracket of Lennon's primal period. How else you account for the reportedly totally revived Young now touring the States with CSN&Y, I don't know – but it's now up to me to provide the documentary evidence from the album itself. An album that – for me- seems clearly to be Neil Young's best so far.
Steve, in his original review, suggested that 'On The Beach' was the result of Young's supposed disenchantment with studio-recording. He'd done 'Time Fades Away' "live" and 'Journey Through The Past' was a rag-bag of "live" cuts and studio, out-takes; 'On The Beach' was his first serious studio effort since 'Harvest' in 1972. The supposition is that Young was postponing the inevitable because he *knew* he couldn't cut it anymore. More apparent evidence for this lies in his seeming dither over what the new album would consist of. The title alone changed four times.
The "postponement" guess is probably fairly accurate and it supports both cases. If he had no faith in himself anymore, he'd hold off – and, if he didn't quite know what he was about to say, he'd hold off just the same.

The ironically-named Young practices his grumbling



Young: "And this one's called 'Free Symbionia'..."

It's still supposition, though. On the other hand, if we've "supposed" so far, we might as well keep on supposing.

Suppose Neil Young was getting towards his wits' end, what with all that's expected of him and fatigue and drugs and directionlessness-made-a-virtue and all. Suppose it was time to make a new album and he had the material ready, just like he had six times before, but somehow didn't believe in it anymore – didn't believe himself, didn't believe his audience were picking out what *he* regarded as important in his songs. He's stymied and he's going down fast. Then something happens that Opens His Eyes. Someone says something to him, something happens –whatever. He suddenly realises where he is and what he's doing. Perspective. Reality. He writes a new bunch of songs fast. Out comes 'On The Beach'.

The precise nature of the occurrence which changed Young's head, will be looked at later. For now, let's keep that supposition in mind and begin looking at the album.

'Walk On' walks the album on. Gently rocking, very "live" sound, but very clear too. At once we get Perspective: "*I remember the good old days...*". And straight after we get the Reality available from that vantage-point: "*Sooner or later it all gets real/ Walk on.*"

Say the person he's talking to here is his current lady, Carrie Snodgrass, and the "them" in question is Young's audience.

Ze pieces begin to fit together, *nein*?

A lyrical bitterness about "the man" (and you can take it straight as Big Business or vend it towards the Drug Connection) is reiterated constantly through the record, from his showbiz/high society aspect in 'For The Turnstiles' ("*Singing songs for pimps with tailors/ Who charge ten dollars at the door*") to industrialise magnates in 'Revolution Blues'. It's hard to say whether 'Revolution Blues' is meant to be seen from Young's point of view or from that of a persona. Manifestly he doesn't live "*in a trailer at the edge of town*" or possess "*twenty-five rifles just to keep the population down*". Manson's lot, maybe – or, more relevantly, the SLA. But not our Neil. On the other hand, he evidently *identifies* strongly with that outlaw-avenger attitude, even if he's laughing about it while he's pulling triggers in his head. The mode is prime '65 Dylan. Militant psychotic-surreal.

'For The Turnstiles' is about how everybody gets nailed by The Business Of Fame sooner or later, underlined in an extraordinary closing verse in which Young sees all the baseball stars "*left to die on their diamonds*" (batting bases) while "*in the stands the home crowd scatters/ For the turnstiles.*"

On side two we get to the real meat: the tale of Young's personal experience in the last few years and the story upon which this whole interpretation hangs. In successive verses, Young find himself alone at a microphone after a radio-interview and interjects the image of being "*out here on the beach*" where "*the seagulls are still out of reach*"; he resolves to get out of town, head for the sticks with his bus and his friends, and follow the road, although he doesn't know where it ends – the song closing with a repeat of the solitary line "*The world is turning/ I hope it don't turn away*" and a beautiful guitar solo over a slow fade. 'Motion Pictures", dedicated to his girlfriend, Carrie, star of *Diary Of A Mad Housewife*, is the work of a man who had a shrewd suspicion that The Business was doing him in, and only just found out *how*. It covers this ground with the impressive economy which characterises the whole album: "*All those headliners, they just bore me now/ I'm deep inside myself, but I'll get out somehow/ I'll bring a smile to your eyes.*" Which has, in turn been arrived at via a verse that represents The Young Policy Statement For The Past: "*Well, all those people, they think they've got it made/ But I wouldn't buy, sell, borrow, or trade/ Anything I have to be like one of them/ I'd rather start all over again.*" Note the echo of the last line of 'Stage Fright' and the deadly seriousness of the proposition. All the loose strands are woven together in the final track, 'Ambulance Blues' – a beautiful song, possibly Young's best ever. Young picks an aged acoustic and blows smeary harp, Ben Keith slaps a bass that keeps getting its shoes caught in the mud, Ralph Molina pats hand-drums almost inaudibly, Joe Yankee chinks an "electric tambourine" (sounding, as Steve said, "like somebody dropping silver" into it), and Rusty Kershaw's violin sounds like the hillbilly cousin of Robin Williamson's creaking gimbri. It's raining. Obsessively so.

Young now sounds actively dangerous, while Dylan just sings his own gospel

The lyrics open with a direct reference to the Perspective outlined at the beginning of the album: "*Back in the old folkie days, the air was magic when we played...*"

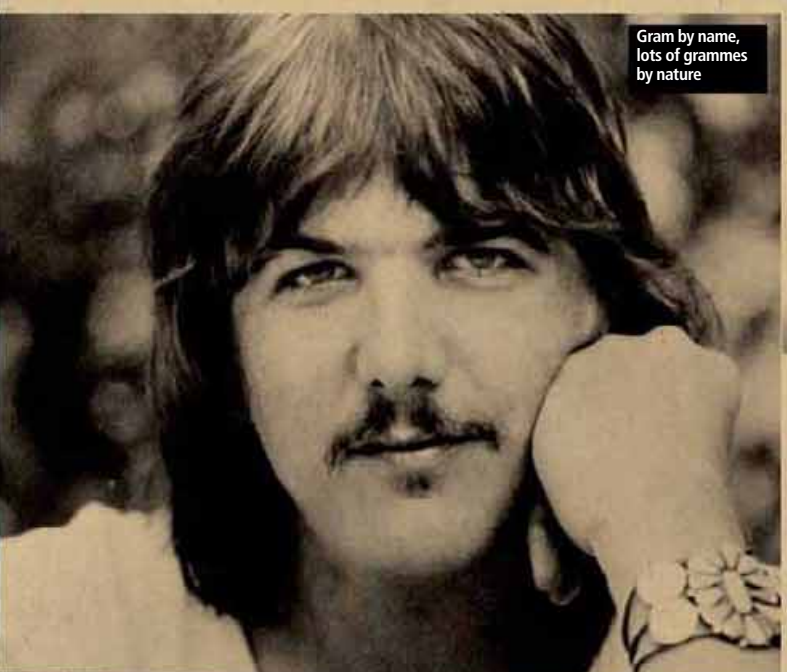
The verse again, and a crucial one: "*I guess I'll call it sickness gone/ It's hard to say the meaning of this song/ An ambulance can only go so fast/ It's easy to get buried in the past/ When you try to make a good thing last.*"

Which supports the case for the Traumatic Change Theory quite admirably. Now it's just a case of (a) What caused the change?, and (b) What does the change involve?

While we're mulling what this character means, Young blows some more, now rather deflated harp. Only it isn't a breather. It's a Dramatic Pause. Young slams back with the rebuttal and a clear statement of where he's at now: "*I never knew a man could tell so many lies/ He had a different story for every set of eyes/ How could he remember who he's talking to/ 'Cos I know it ain't me and I hope it isn't you...*"

That certainly doesn't sound like the work of a depressed, negative man to me. It sounds extremely *positive*, actually – and note that 'Ambulance Blues' is the only track thus listed which isn't any kind of blue at all. There's scattered evidence for A Dylan Experience in many tracks from 'On The Beach', but the more important thing is that, though Dylan and Young may have taken a parallel path recently, Young now sounds actively dangerous, whereas Dylan's just singing his own peculiar gospel. ***Ian MacDonald***
(Piss off – S Clarke)

RETNA



Gram by name, lots of grammes by nature

GRAM PARSONS
Grievous Angel

Reprise

NME, 23 February 1974, page 41

When you're sitting in a trailer at 2 am somewhere out in 'Last Stopsville', and there's just you, one more hit of apple wine, the chick on the calendar, and a radio, consider yourself lucky if you can find a country and western station.

The next time you feel a little humility inching up your rock-ravaged brain, play your cards right and saturate yourself with the late Gram Parsons. On 'Grievous Angel', his last recorded LP, Parsons makes no country-rock compromises. It's all straight rodeo, pure'n'simple. Steel guitars; Johnny Cash, June Carter vocals (provided with the help of songstress Emmylou Harris). The title song is as down-home as an old Ford pick-up sitting on cement blocks in the backyard. Love in a plaid flannel shirt, brought to you by the same folks who'd sooner milk a pig than listen to some pretty boy crooning about Max Factor and tight assholes.

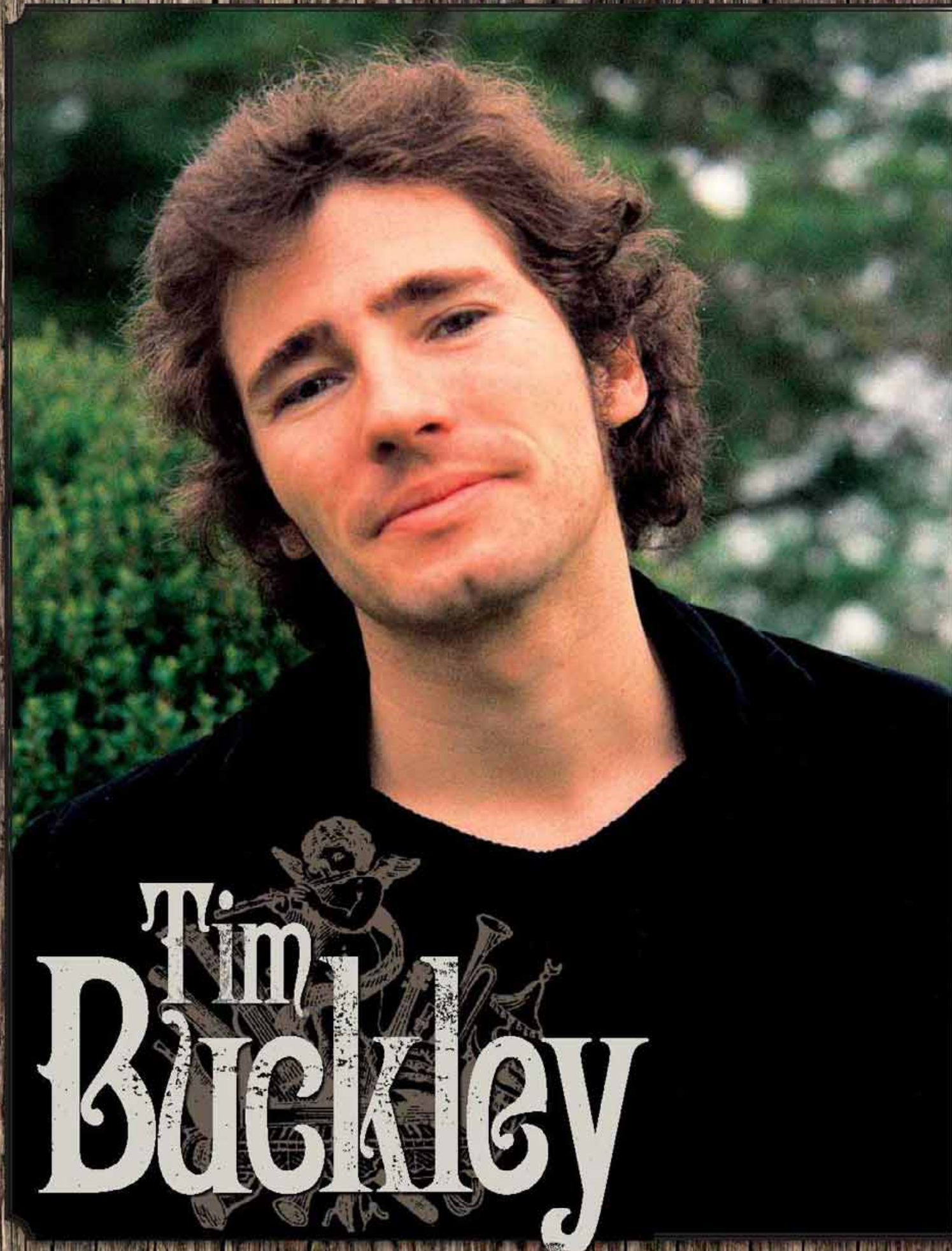
'Heart's On Fire', cannot be heard by anyone who's ever been broken hearted without provoking a long pensive gaze out the window. I don't like to be sentimental but 'Brass Buttons' almost had me in tears. "*The sun still comes up without her/ It just doesn't know she's gone*".

That buckeroo, is a love song broken down to its most common denominator.

'Las Vegas' assures me that under all that sweet sorrow lies an active sense of humour. "*Well the Queen Of Spades is a friend of mine/ The Queen Of hearts is a bitch/ Someday when I clear up my head/ I'll find out which is which*".

If you like country music, get this album. If you don't like country music get this album, and if you still don't like country music, go back to Black Sabbath and try Gram again next year.

Chrissie Hynde



Tim Buckley

How a Hippy Hero became a sultry Sex Object and had a simply devastating effect on the glands of a certain CHRISSIE HYNDE

NME, June 1974, page 42

It's a summer night, Anytown USA, 1969. We're sitting in a loosely constructed circle under the bridge, passing around a gallon jug of cheap Californian red wine. The river stinks of detergent and oil, but the smog has lifted and the full moon splashes us with ribald ideas. A few chicks plunge into the greasy water labelled a fire hazard by the city council as the whistle of an oncoming train is heard from a few miles away.

Someone throws the now empty jug downstream and it's a quick scramble up the river bank and over the bridge railing. Stumbling drunk, we simultaneously leap onto the passing train and clutch those iron ladders for dear life, sliding between the moving cars like Jack Kerouac pros, making a flying dismount onto Main Street. Holding a piece of sandstone in her hand, Colleen points to one of the box-cars. Under the large stencilled letters B&O (Baltimore-Ohio) is scribbled a name: Tim Buckley.

Seems like a long time since that waif countenance gazed down at us from its lace on the altar-like mantle of a hundred hippy novels. See, Tim wasn't just a musician, he was spokesman for the love-in generation, an ultimate being that everybody wanted to be and go down on at the same time. Boys… girls… didn't matter, and his wasn't an AC/DC appeal, rather one of that gentle wandering minstrel we all fancied ourselves as. Nobody's ever looked prettier – and that image combined with one of the most sensual, multicoloured voices ever… well, how could any underdog resist?

But times change. Here I am interviewing him, and the Indian moccasins, sweet expression, and even the windblown locks which once crowned him in curls and became his trademark, are now gone. In fact, Tim's burly and aggressive – an American's American. The cleft chin and shorn hair provide the very looks sought out by the advertising world to sell toothpaste, razor blades, aftershave and sporty cars. I'm even tempted to ask his stud fee, but don't.

I do ask him, whatever happened to the lonely hotel room image?

"Well, when you're working that's all there is. I was on the road since 1964 to '71."

How old were you in '64?

"16 or 17."

So you really were an innocent youth, huh?

"Well, when you're 18 you're sorta still right outta the choir aren't you? And you have to consider the year. Kids now that are 14 are strung out on reds and heroin and pregnant maybe a couple of times. I mean, really been through it by 16. Before, you didn't get laid 'til 17, 18, *maybe,* if you were lucky and got the cheerleader drunk at the right time.

"Whether it's good or bad I'm really at odds with it. I got an 11-year-old boy and a 15-year-old sister, and she's just about washed up, all the shit she's done. I don't know if the body will be there by 23. I'm ready for the ass to fall any minute.

"You've seen the acid casualties of '66. Whereas kids five years old are now experiencing down-home problems without having to make their own way. Still getting compensation from pop and mom, but 'living the blues' as it were. *Bullshit*! So now a concert consists of 13-year-olds passing coffee cans of pills around and listening to Deep Purple. And they don't respond! But I have to stay in tune with the whole thing 'cause I'm a writer and it's America."

At this point I realise I could talk to him for hours before even touching on his musical interests. I'm still feeling dizzy at just meeting the guy whose singing sends me into raptures. I've often thought (when listening to, for example, 'Strange Feeling' from the 'Happy Sad' album) that if sound could create orgasm, Buckley'd have to have his throat registered as a dangerous weapon. I can't help but ask about some of those songs that led me through my teenagehood when the going got rocky… like, he seems to have gotten well away from the idealism of the 'Goodbye Hello' days.

> If sound could create orgasm, Buckley would have to have his throat registered as a dangerous weapon

In fact that album was pretty much a statement of youth as a whole, old hating young, young hating old and not getting each other into their worlds.

"What makes somebody kill for their country? It's a little easier to understand in an alley, when you're being attacked, but then you're paid and fed to become a professional soldier, where's that at – right? That's what that was about, so the album wasn't idealistic. It came out of an idealistic period of time – the acid days and all that. And I think it was probably understood to mean things it didn't mean. But everything's like that".

Look at the Buckley of today and muse over the developments that have evolved in his music over the years. 1970 saw him at his most avant-garde with the release of 'Starsailor', beyond category and with dazzlingly innovative content. The mountain boy of his previous efforts went crazed astronaut on 'Starsailor'. It was the type of statement great artists always seem to make just before they freak out, OD or fade into obscurity.

For two years it looked like Buckley had taken the last course, and then, in 1972, he reappeared with 'Greetings From LA', and if his fans were unhinged by 'Starsailor', 'Greetings...' had them upside down with confusion. At least I sure as hell was, when I saw his LA set over a year ago. I trotted dutifully to some bowling alley dive to see him, and felt my brains drip outta my ears when the virginal innocent of my dreams got on stage and started belting out "*Get on top of me darlin' woo-maan!! Let me see what you learned!*"

What brought on this change to overt sexuality?'

"Oh well. After 'Starsailor', I took about a year off and started a book – movie scripts which will be turned into books – and I'm told, 'Well, you better make another album'. And I said OK and I was just sitting there… and I hadn't touched the guitar in a long time and I thought, well, I have to get up-to-date.

"I saw nine black exploitation movies, read four black 'sock-it-to-me-mama' books and read all the rock criticisms. I took a week off, read all the *Rolling Stone* things, and finally realised that all of the sex idols in rock'n'roll weren't saying anything sexy.

"Or had I learned anything sexually from a song? Or for that matter pornographic? So I decided to make it human and not so mysterious, and to deal with the problems as they really are, so I guess that's where the innocence went."

And if go you must, go in style, say I. And, of course, Buckley always does. The song he mentions as his personal favourite, 'Sweet Surrender', is cruel and poignant, a walk right through the jungle.

'Sefronia', the latest edition to Buckley's recorded achievements, is more or less a pot pourri of his own and other people's compositions. Unusual for him since in the past he's pretty well stuck to his own material, often co-written with poet Larry Beckett.

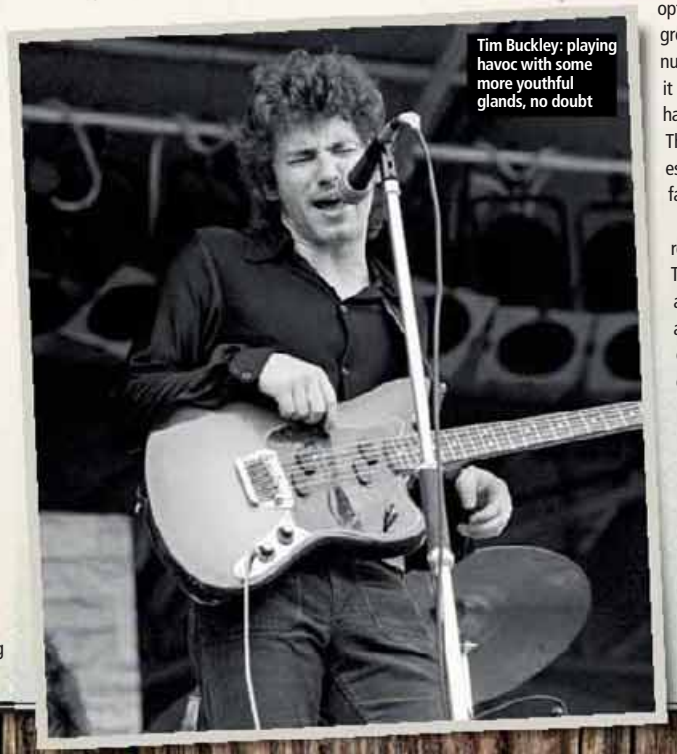
We talk about the state of the States with the pseudo-apathy and lethargic concern. Tim manages to assure me that the place isn't going to fall, but…

"It'll get more moronic. The '70s haven't been too optimistic, have they? But it's going to be great for the avant-garde. Warhol's going nuts! The problem with the avant is that it happens too quickly and by the time it's happened commercially, it's all been done. There's basically an artistic resentment by the establishment 'cause they don't get the idea fast enough."

And Buckley seems to hold a bit of artistic resentment himself for the establishment. The fact that he's apparently chosen to lead a life with some semblance of anonymity, as a working artist opposed to the glam bag of stardom, shows it. He's certainly had opportunities on end to be a bopper idol.

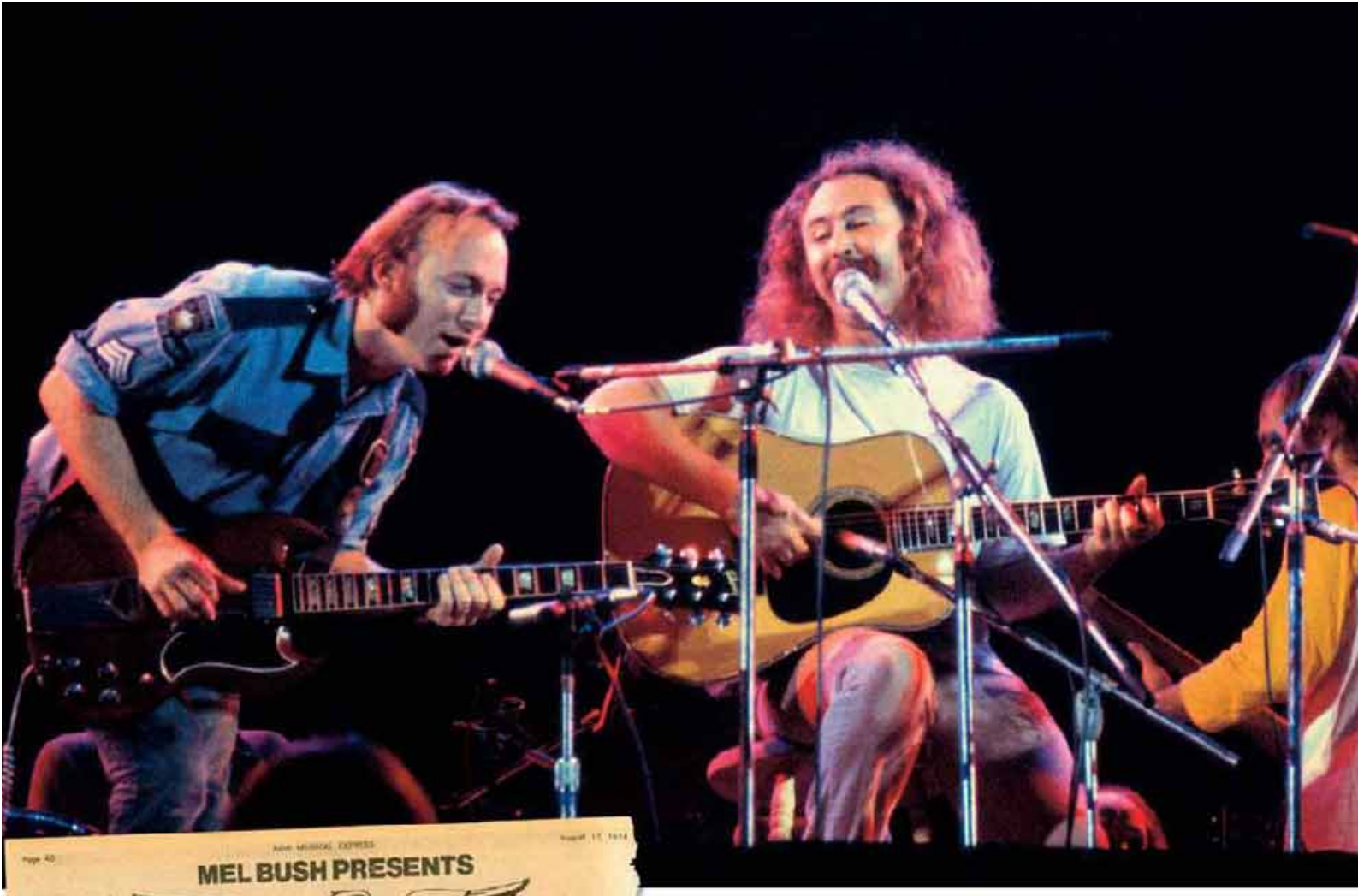
In a 1974 issue of *NME*, Buckley states: "Well, my life does not depend on the Top 40. It's so anonymous, it always has been, and that's not where it is, that's not where people are."

So next time you turn on the radio you may not hear him – but wander outside your insulated world of rock newspapers, *Top Of The Pops* and all the safety of home, and the music you hear will surely include the songs of Tim Buckley.



Tim Buckley: playing havoc with some more youthful glands, no doubt

WIREIMAGE/REDFERNS



WOODSTOCK

Nick Kent and Charles Shaar Murray join 72,000 folk-heads for Britain's biggest ever concert, as the titans of the folk rock boom take over Wembley Stadium for one amazing day

NME, 21 September 1974, page 21

"You know, Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young just aren't liable to have a bad night because of the personalities. Even if the music isn't happening, the fact that those guys are there makes it cool" – **Neil Young**, *Rolling Stone*, April 30, 1970

"We lucked out" – **David Crosby**, exclusive interview with the authors, 3am September 15, 1974

1.30pm

There are some weird-looking fellas a-lolly-gaggin' around behind the amplifiers and speaker cabinets. One of them possesses the shabby exterior of a deck-chair attendant, though the mirror shades and straw-coloured pork pie hat – which looks at first like it could have been stolen from a horse – elevates his appearance into a realm akin to that of a character who deals in stolen watches all set for a cameo walk-on in *Hawaii Five-O*. This figure, by the way, is Neil Young. He was joined by other spectators – both Stephen Stills and David Crosby, the latter more than ever resembling a benign bison swaddled in a yachting anorak, took their place to the left of the stage at one point, while there was always some tow-haired Laurel Canyon sun-child leaning provocatively on the amps taking a Polaroid or two of the action onstage or else focusing her lens over that morass of "beautiful people" spread out like flies in a reservoir.

Still, it's Neil and Steve you tend to zero in

REPFOTO

S, C, N & Y; "And if you think this is good, you should taste our broth"

COMES TO WEMBLEY

on simply because they're the most agitated – bouncing up and down on their canvas seats, miming to the thrusting deliberation of the music being played. The music, mind you, because this is The Band and The Band play The Music ('on Capitol records and tapes' as large numbers of slogans written on balloons and paper sun-hats given out during the set testified to); The Band are the ones you always have this urge to unerringly respect, even if their supreme professionalism often ends up as sounding impeccably dour – not to mention the fact that they really haven't made any personal advances in the last four years. The musicians involved appear to be only too aware of this, sticking almost exclusively to material culled from their first three albums, a state of affairs which at the same time has helped iron out the starch formerly omnipresent in their live performances. I mean, some of the boys even move around now – principally Rick Danko, who was even jumping up and down at one point, having dumped the old cowboy duds for a Sunset Blvd suede hipster-deluxe jacket, while Robbie Robertson, sans facial fair and as a result looking almost frighteningly like a '70s reincarnation of Buddy Holly, was well into the reserved rocker stance, legs slightly apart not unlike those early stills of Eddie Cochran, the fingers constantly whittling out that arch-wiry style of lead guitar played like a far more metallic and generally off the wall-oriented James Burton. The vigour of much of the music was often untouchable, thundering along like some diesel express propelled by Levon Helm's almost militaristically-impelled sense of rhythmic dynamics.

The numbers, though, were somehow too predictable in their sequence – 'Just Another Whistle Stop', 'Across The Great Divide', 'Stage Fright' (in fact The Band appeared to be very much infatuated with the songs from the 'Stage Fright' album in particular that day), a particularly invigorating 'The Shape I'm In' which showcased Danko's fingers leaping all over his fret-board. Hudson, for once, was a letdown, though this may have had more to do with the sound system which more often than not tended to submerge his playing. Still, even when it sounded like they were just churning 'em out, it was hard not to be impressed. And Bob Dylan was nowhere to be seen.

Another era-defining moment as Joni Mitchell joins CSN&Y

3.15pm

A sizeable crowd has blossomed dubiously outside the dressing room entrance. The audience on superficial 'spec appears to be a fairly tame cross-section of the suburban denim long-hair out for a lark and the music. There are also a lot of girls in long skirts sporting that lank benign look of confused femininity which is rather synonymous with the younger Joni Mitchell bedsitter aficionado.

At a guess, at least three-quarters of this audience, possess a CSN&Y album, a half own a Joni Mitchell album, and maybe a fifth can boast one Band album.

3.30pm

The promise of Joni Mitchell and her cream-coloured Bill Blas summer wear…

But first, Tom Scott & The LA Express, who run through a non-pleasant extrapolation of main stream hep-jazz, sucking up stock quotes from the Hancock and McLaughlin schools of frenetic expression.

In due course, the Lady Of The Canyon herself glided out, toothily immaculate in white shirt, cream-coloured jeans and jacket. Though at times during the first half of her set she had to compete with Scott's rather over-amplified horn, the rest of the LA Express didn't get in the way overmuch. She opened up with 'Free Man In Paris', seeming just a tad ill at ease.

Most of her material came from 'Court And Spark' and 'For The Roses', with 'Woman Of Heart And Mind' particularly outstanding. She made regular peregrinations between keyboard and acoustic guitar, her voice becoming stronger and stronger and her phrasing more and more confident almost from number to number. She even closed out the first section of her set with 'Woodstock'. Despite a rather ill-judged back-up job from Mr Scott and his associates, we owe her a vote of thanks for including the song, because that meant that CSN&Y wouldn't be singing it. The Scott treatment worked admirably for 'Big Yellow Taxi', though.

"We're going to be taking a five minute break to re-arrange some microphones," she announced after 'Woodstock'. It was more like 15, but when she returned she performed solo for a while, which was more than welcome. It would be very easy for Ms Mitchell's somewhat fragile charm to fail to make the journey from the stage out to the 72,000th person in the audience, but it was heartening to note that her solo segment, dulcimer and all, seemed to communicate even better than the full weight of the LA Express. 'Rainy Night House' and 'The Last Time I Saw Richard' in a particular were just fine, and 'This Flight Tonight' seems to have recovered quite satisfactorily from the heavy-metallisation it received from Nazareth.

Eventually, the LA Express steamed back in, playing waaaay too fast on 'Raised On Robbery', and she ended up with a fine performance of Annie Ross' 'Twisted'.

How unfortunate, therefore, that she should decide to do her best to blow the whole thing with a singularly unfortunate monologue. "Are you crazeee?" she inquired of the assembled gathering.

What is this? Joni Mitchell performing the collected speeches of Noddy Holder?

"When you were two years old, did the little girl down the road tell you that you had a bear in your basement?" she said. Puzzled silence. There are no bears in England, darlin' – this ain't Saskatchewan. "All right," she continued undeterred, "now did the school system make you crazy?" Yeah! "Now, was it your teachers or your peers who drove you crazy?"

There was a lot more in the same

The moment someone told Joni Mtchell there was a bear in the drum riser

vein, but since it was both rather embarrassing and somewhat depressing, we'll spare you the details, except to add that Annie Ross herself was trotted on for a cameo at the climax of 'Twisted'. Still, four minutes of excruciating lameness can't destroy an hour and a half of genuine excellence, though it can sour things slightly.

5.45pm

Like a good record company should, Atlantic had set up a bar behind a set of screens so that the exalted could booze apart from the sprawled-out multitudes. A full complement of Zeppelins were in attendance, with John Bonham resplendent in tweed jacket and hat and a quite awe-inspiring paunch, looking quite the gentleman farmer. Robert Plant, and his lady, apparently had some kind of a brush with security men as they attempted to watch The Band from the photographers' front-stage area. Jimmy Page, who was later to distinguish himself during the after-hours jam, was proclaiming his undying love for Ms Mitchell at quite high volume, thought he had found her recent Victoria Palace gig more arousing. "It was more – uh – *intimate*," he opined.

6.30pm

Graham is wearing a Buddy Holly T-shirt and a Telecaster. He is very thin. David is wearing a white T-shirt under a denim shirt and a Gretsch 12-string. He is not very thin. Stephen is wearing a military shirt and a Gibson Firebird. He is not very thin either, except around the scalp. Neil is dressed as before, and he finds his way over to the organ almost as if he knew it was there. He is very tall, and lean to boot. A writer of third-rate westerns might describe him as "rangy".

With minimal delay they pitch into 'Love The One You're With', and at once displaying a sense of vitesse and cocaine purposefulness that is none-too-unimpressive even when confronting the most rigid veneer of cynicism. Stills is particularly athletic, fairly savaging his fretboard, while Crosby is plumping more for the energetic full-tilt strum. This, you mutter to yourself, is going to be rather good.

The whole band sound good and Neil Young hasn't even stepped out into the main spotlights yet. 'Wooden Ships' goes someway further to compounding the sense of controlled frenzy that literally held sway during 'Love The One'. Events again even up during Nash's 'Immigration Man' – Nash on piano and Young on guitar and chorus vocals, stamping his leg clumsily to the beat. These numbers are important because with the exception of one or two instances – principally a rather moving united rendition of Young's great 'Don't Be Denied' and the last encore, some three hours later, 'Ohio' – they stand out as the only real moments that CSN&Y meshed thoroughly as a group.

'Helpless' was Young's first shambling spot-light gambit and even when he was joining in the festivities musically, he seemed the most aloof.

Ah, that aura – those legs – that hat! Already Young was having problems with his harmonica holder – he was in fact wearing two instead of one and hadn't noticed the difference – not to mention periodically dousing the reeds of his numerous harmonicas in tequila – "The show's movin' right along here," he mutters at one point, displaying a matchless dead-pan timbre to his voice attained previously only by James Stewart.

Young's subsequent musical statement, though, was easily the best new song of the evening. Titled 'Traces' it was one of those perfect Buffalo Springfield-like distillations of the early Beatles sound circa 'Ask Me Why', complemented by Young's wry sense of arch-simplicity in the lyric content.

Then came Nash's bounding 'Military Madness', followed unfortunately by Crosby's epic paranoid anthem 'Almost Cut My Hair'. Boy, David Crosby can write a lame song when he wants to! Not to mention compounding the felony with a most heinous display of vocal overkill which stopped just short of out-and-out comedy. One should add though that Crosby has toned down his act quite impressively. Not one utterly facile stoned quasi-political consciousness rap to his dubious credit during the whole set, and even his cosmic grin had its own charm.

Crosby has toned downs his act impressively. Not one utterly facile stoned quasi-political consciousness rap to his dubious credit during the whole set.

Crosby, it was again, who set the acoustic set a-rolling with 'The Lee Shore', followed by a new ponderously 'mellow' (sorry about that) work which somehow survived even the appearance onstage of Stills, holding a baby, to inflate the 'goo' quotient. Just. Crosby left his fatuous leanings for an introduction to Graham Nash. "One of my very best friends and one of the few people in the word to win my respect". Ouch! This is where things begin to plummet towards the 'bland-turns-to-grim' quagmire.

Nash, seated piously behind the piano, looking like he had been constructed out of straw and pieces of twine – "Uh… this is the first time in a number of years that I've been able to let myself get involved in a love affair." Do tell us more, Graham, do.

"Uh… this is dedicated to Cally." Fair enough, except that after this gargantuan heart-worn-on-the-sleeve number our Graham simpered his way through one of those utterly drippy "Goodnight-sleep-tight-when-you-awake-I'll-be-there-beside-you" efforts, exhibiting at the same time an alarmingly clumsy piano technique and sense of melodic inventiveness.

For this he was given a standing ovation not simply by his dewy-eyed cohorts but by the whole audience. Now this is when the event started to become aesthetically questionable at least in our eyes. The audience went on to snap up 'Our House' and one of those quintessentially wimpy paeans to confusion found on 'Wild Tales' like horses knocking back sugar cubes, and bashful boyish Graham was the hero of at least that hour. Stephen Stills was starting to get a touch morose by this time. At one point he responded to concentrated shouts to "sit down" aimed at members of the audience around the barricades with "I'll tell ya once and I'll tell ya one time only – Siddown!" bearing the earmarks of that thoroughly obnoxious style of artistic macho – "Don't mess with me, I'm a poet and a musician, buddy!"

Still's piece was delayed for a while though, by Neil Young, who was great. The usual shambles over what key his harmonica should be in and the like – Neil has obviously been watching JJ Cale of late – but once he'd set firmly into a number, things were just swell. 'Hawaiian Sunset' made a few cringe, though at least one of us thought it bore a pleasing reminder to some of Brian Wilson's post-'Pet Sounds', pre-'Surf's Up' whimsical wanders – 'Love/Art Blues' was straight plodding country with great lyrics. Young even threw in 'Old Man' and 'Only Love Can Break Your Heart' (again with Ms Mitchell on slightly dubious harmony part) not to mention a thoroughly inspired 'Don't Be Denied', again with Mitchell and Stills playing some fine lead work. "Now" Nash announced, "We're going to leave you alone with Stephen Stills." His first was entitled 'Legend Of Something Or Other', but Stills' diction was not at its best at that moment.

Ms Mitchell joined the ensemble for 'Change Partners', and she and Young added their participation to 'Suite: Judy

RETNA

NME, 21 September 1974, page 24

BACKSTAGE: Roy Carr

THE SKIES above Wembley may have been clear of jet bombers riding shotgun, but a 707 awaiting clearance to land at Heathrow came pretty close to joining CSN&Y's neo-accapella rendition of McCartney's "Blackbird."

If manager Elliot Roberts had known in advance I bet ya he'd have had it written into the contract that the jet had to turn into a butterfly!

You see, everything at this concert had to run smoother than the grease dripping on the hamburger stalls. It was a big organisation job.

I mean, where the hell do you suddenly find a cut-glass vase with a freshly cut tiger lily stuck in it to accompany a request for one dozen red roses? I dunno, but there they were waiting onstage when Joni Mitchell stepped up to the microphone.

Likewise, if Tequila Sunrise is to be the "official" backstage beverage, you gotta make sure the ingredients are right — and the only way is to have the brew ready-mixed by an expert and flown in direct from California.

In comparison to that kind of thing, organising the 14 large plastic dustbins containing 400 lbs. of ice cubes and Heineken beer, 200 hand-towels and a gallon of boiling water, sliced lemons and honey required onstage were just plain chicken-feed for promoter Mel Bush.

But, getting jet airliners to alter their flight paths . . . well, let's just say he's working on it!

THE FINAL count-down began at 10.00 p.m. on Friday following the last race of the evening greyhound meeting. That was when the artists glided up in their rented limos for a sound-check.

A-chitty-chattin' back o' stage: GRAHAM NASH, MARIANNE FAITHFULL, CHELITA SECUNDA

After that, well, Mel Bush could be seen at 4.30 a.m. hammering in the last remaining pegs holding down the coconut matting on the Wembley turf, and at 10.20 on the morning of the show he took over from a couple of scaffolders who'd collapsed from exhaustion after working 36 hours straight without a kip.

"I CAN'T wait to get out there and start playing," Graham "Jughead" Nash babbled in pure Mancunian tones as the road crew began setting up the equipment for the last set of the day.

All Californian inflections were gone as he enthused: "Yer know, I've brought me Mam down to see the show 'cause it's gonna be the best one of the entire tour."

He cast his eyes over the panoramic view and concluded: "When I look out there and realise that all those kids have turned up to see us . . . man, it makes me real proud to be British."

With that Nash excused himself to exchange pleasantries with George Harrison, prior to rounding up Archie, Betty and Veronica.

Indeed, Harrison was one of the few celebrities present who were content to lurk quietly behind the equipment. At the other extreme, Britt Ekland pointed her cameras at anything that moved, while Marianne Faithfull went one better and frantically hugged everyone within reach — including a somewhat embarrassed Bianca Jagger, who'd been quite content to play it low-key seeing as her spouse was conspicuous by his absence.

Obviously impressed by the smoothness of the whole operation, John Paul Jones — sporting a "Back To The Farm" slogan on his shirt — tactfully evaded the subject of when Zeppelin were going to put concert tickets on sale again.

"Not this year," he said. "I mean, I haven't even managed to harvest all my barley." And fellow gentleman farmer John Bonham suggested that if they ever played Wembley, he'd commandeer the entire front-stage area to display his prize Hereford livestock.

Bonham could probably get away with it . . . because the Director General of the Greater London Council was extremely pleased with the way this entire gig was presented, to the extent that he approached Mel Bush with a view to even closer co-operation for any future events.

The Director General even went so far as to concede that the GLC had been wrong about demanding that a wire fence be erected around the pitch, after the punters dismantled it.

"I really fought hard," said Bush, "against having that fence put up, but I was overruled at two of my meetings with the GLC — even after I explained that it might cause some aggravation. I mean, you don't want to pay £3.50 and then have to sit behind a fence.

"However, it won't be there in the future."

On the subject of future events, Bush commented: "I feel we really proved that the Big Show can work sound-wise." But he was self-critical on one aspect. "When you put on something this large, I'm afraid you definitely lose out on the visual side, and that's something we've got to look into.

"There's no two ways about it, you need Idaform video-projection screens on both sides of the stage — even though that can cost £6,000 to set up — because in no way can you get a concert hall ambience on an occasion like this. By installing video-projectors, you reach all 72,000 fans."

VIDEO-PROJECTORS or not, one person who seemed enthralled by the entire event was George Harrison — who looked like he was paying special attention to Graham Nash's tactics as CSN&Y peace-keeper. This prompted an onlooker to gesture to Harrison and comment, "Well, it's his turn next." Now that would be somethin'!

termittently since the ... with the material that ... brings

Blue Eyes'. While Young's guitar-scratching helped to fill things out somewhat, Joni was more of a hindrance than a help, seemingly unsure of both the lyrics and of a viable fourth harmony part. When she got it right, it was just fine. When she didn't it was musical toothache.

"I'd like to dedicate this to a man who I befriended a few days ago – and have been wanting to for years," Stills murmured. Surprise, surprise – it was McCartney's old pick and croon special, 'Blackbird'. You could almost smell the sense of occasion – the Fab Four sing the Fab Four! Unfortunately, the harmonies were again somewhat shaky and Stills' guitar could have done with a quick tune-up, but it was almost pretty. The same could not be said for 'Word Game', a staggeringly offensive attempt at a retread of 'It's All Right, Ma', with Stills mingling mock-Indian with mock-blues at a positively frenetic rate of knots. It was prefaced with a brief mumble about South Africa ("I'm from thuh Saouth – and it kinda makes me mayud") and it even incorporated a line about glitter shoes. Such is the scorn that Stills reserves for mere creatures of fashion.

Out of all of them, it seemed that Stills was the one most anxious to stamp his presence as an individual over the set. Where Young's exuberant rocking back and forth seemed merely like a man getting off and enjoying himself, Stills gave the impression more of posturing, as he flayed a pair of congas on 'Face To Face', one of his new songs, stalked dramatically back to his amp on the last chord, or grimaced with just the right touch of intensity. His worst moment, however, came on 'Black Queen'. The song's original appearance was as an endearingly overblown parody of an old country blues singer on 'Stephen Stills I' – you know the anecdote about him and Clapton getting totally bombed on tequila and Stills recording it after El Cappo had to be carried to his car.

Here the number has metamorphosed into full-blown heavy metal – Young laying down the riff, stomping like a madman and grinning through his stubble, while Stills rampaged all over the stage blowing demented, incoherent solos and pulling the most God-awful faces while running through the basic library of "killer axeman" poses. He stuck the guitar into his crotch, held it in the air, dropped into squats, waved his arms about as if the strings of his guitar had suddenly become electrified and generally ponced about. It seemed fairly ludicrous coming from a short balding gentlemen with an impending pot belly and baggy trousers.

The second electric segment had begun with David Crosby leading the ensemble through a tight, efficient version of 'Déjà Vu', with Young producing some quite commendable jazzy doodles from the piano. Crosby seemed to sense that Stills and Young were the ones that the audience were most interested in, and so he fronted the band but infrequently. Though his always loose lead singing often verged on the sloppy, his harmonising was always the mainstay of the backing vocals and yes, Virginia, David Crosby *is* a great rhythm guitarist. Shame he couldn't be persuaded to resuscitate 'Lady Friend', his last Byrds song, and in our joint opinion, his finest recorded moment.

The last lap also included Nash's 'Pre-Road Downs', a lively but intrinsically trivial piece and a pleasant enough way to kill a few minutes while waiting for the final spasms. 'Carry On' – a song far too slight to bear the burden of the high-intensity guitar duels that take up three quarters of its length in performance – had Nash wandering about disconsolately banging assorted percussibles while Crosby anchored down the rhythm section and Stills and Young fired off guitar salvoes at each other from across the stage. And all the time, folks were howling (in vain, as it turned out) for 'Southern Man'. Three and a half hours and they didn't do 'Southern Man'. Boo. In its place was a new Young song, entitled 'Pushed It Over The Edge', which is indeed part of the 'Southern Man'/'Cowgirl In The Sand' canon, featuring as it does that basic Neil Young Guitar Figure.

Young was laying down the riff, stomping like a madman and grinning through his stubble

The closer was 'Ohio', a wise choice for an ending, since it presents CSN&Y as a united front in a manner seen only intermittently since the beginning of the set. 'Ohio' was great; raging but deliberate, fiery but fully under control, driving remorselessly, all four channelling their energies straight into the song.

It was the finest possible ending, giving full play to CSN&Y's strengths and completely eliminating their weaknesses. They finished as they had begun – powerful, unified and genuinely impressive. Y'know, leave 'em wanting more even after three and a half hours. Despite their recent impassioned statements to the contrary, most of the show was a case of waiting for Your Fave to do his stuff. Out of the four, it was Young who provided most of the high points. Crosby and Nash – curiously enough, the two who had most commercial success prior to the formation of CSN&Y – seemed to feel a need to step back and allow the other two to do most of the fronting.

But everybody got what they paid for; nobody got burned. It was a definite case of Something For Everybody – everybody got off on something, and most people on everything. For us, though, Neil Young was The Man.

Don't be fooled, Dylan had a copy of *Razzle* hidden in his *Melody Maker* in this scene from *Don't Look Back*

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